TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS

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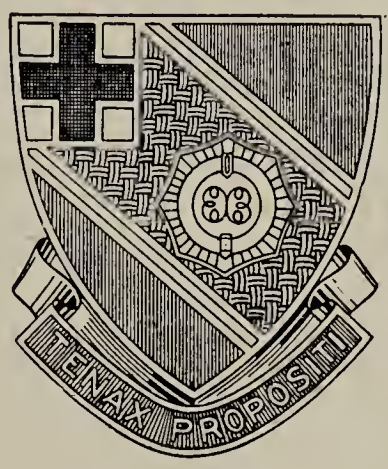
combat history of

COMPANY B

101st Engr 

Combat Bn

by

Pfc John De Rose, Jr

Campaigns

Northern France
Ardennes
Rhineland
Central Europe

July 1944 – July 1945

Sketches by S Sgt D Daviadoff — Cover by S Sgt D Daviadoff

Printed and bound by J. Steinbrener
in Vimperk, Czechoslovakia

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country, but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman . . ."

–Thomas Payne.

"... THE SUMMER SOLDIER AND THE SUNSHINE PATRIOT WILL, IN THIS CRISIS, SHRINK FROM THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY..."

IN MEMORY

Pvt KENNETH COURTNEY

T/4 FRED LEISS

1st Lt DOUGLAS CAMPBELL, Jr

Pfc JOHN DZIOBA

Sgt JACK McCOOL

Pfc ZENO SANDERS

1944 — 1945

— dedicated to —

COMPANY "B"

Just a Word

This is the story of a combat engineer company of the 26th Infantry Division (the Yankee Division) in action in the European Theater of Operations. Written by a member of the 1st Platoon of Company B, the reader may not sense enough bearing on the rest of the company. Not that the 2nd, 3rd, and Hq Platoons are not deserving of such credit. No. The writer is far from being an experienced writer of books; let's blame on that. The book was written from memory, based on maps and morning reports, affording more emphasis on the story, rather than satisfying the desires of individuals who otherwise would feel themselves robbed of mention. It is the author's story, mostly about his platoon, the 1st, dealing considerably with what he himself saw, experienced, and participated in. With this in mind, we introduce you to the trying times of this company . . . .

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"WE'LL-NEVER-SEE-ACTION MOOD" BEGINS TO CHANGE
July 1944

WE FINALLY LEAVE FOR PARTS UNKNOWN
August 1944

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September 1944

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Nick-names, Superiorities

Introduction

I have been asked to write the combat history of my company to be used as a souvenir and remembrance of the operations of our respective sections in combat in the European Theatre of Operations. Now, to delve into the smallest and most insignificant details of individuals in their contacts with the enemy would make this a tremendous "mission", since it is practically impossible to do so with available information on hand. Furthermore, many of the men concerned are now either casualties, transferees, or dead.

Nevertheless, I shall attempt this with our company's Morning Reports as a reliable reference.

With this in mind, I can travel back to the first of July of 1944, back to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, where we were based for our preparation for overseas movement. We were then fresh from a few months of maneuvers in the hills of Tennessee. We can skeptically pass over maneuvers in this introduction, as all we remember about them was that it was simply a taste of war without real shooting. We had yet to experience the horrors, dreads, and fears of actual combat, in which we would eventually be involved within the next few months.

Our favorite by-words at the time were "Hell, the YD'll never go overseas . . . too much politics" and we'd never even think of ever seeing combat; not even when old "Gang-plank" himself would tell us in practically every one of his speeches. "Gang-plank" was our divisional commander, Maj Gen Willard S Paul of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.

We were in the "Yankee Division", the 26th Infantry Division. But most of us were intermingled with "rebels" here and there who would come to us as replacements from various militaristic sources.

Starting way back then in the beginning of July of '44, nearly a month after D-Day in Europe, I commence with the history of our company in the European Theatre of Operations . . .

— the author

PART I

"WE'LL-NEVER-SEE-ACTION MOOD" BEGINS TO CHANGE

July 1944

We were still under the impression that this outfit would never see action. Casually, this impression began to take a different slant. Things were secretly happening all along, things which we'd find out about later on, and which signified the evident preparation our division was making for overseas shipment. Rumors were numerous and of different varieties. We were sailing for Alaska, Iceland, the South Pacific, the ETO, England, or whichever country sounded best to the "rumor-monger."

About one of the first things that opened our eyes to the realization that this was becoming a serious affair was the temporary duty of Lt Wilson, the 2nd Platoon Leader, and T/4 George Bowes at the "Crating and Packing Course" in Camp Gordon, Georgia. Included among the "eye-opening" events which rapidly took place, was the transfer of all of our so-called "4-F" personnel, or men of "limited service" calibre, the arrival of replacements, the fulfillment of "Preparation for Overseas Movement" requirements.

As the month progressed, we became more and more convinced that it wouldn't be long now before we'd be called to leave.

WE FINALLY LEAVE FOR PARTS UNKNOWN

August 1944

At the beginning of August, we became all the more conscious of what was ahead for us. Lt Douglas P Campbell, Jr and Pfc John DeRose, Jr, were attending classes with the "Advanced Detachment" of the division. When, on about the 17th of the month, they packed up and left us, we knew right then and there that "This was it"!

We arrived at Camp Shanks, NY, by rail from Fort Jackson, and remained there, in last minute preparations to board ship, until early evening of the 26th, when we were ferried across the harbor to our ship. We bade farewell to the Statue of Liberty on the 27th. For the rest of the month, we remained on board ship "somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic".

We remember life at sea as just a "cramped-up, uncomfortable life" with nothing but a dark future ahead . . .

WE LAND IN FRANCE AT UTAH BEACH

September 1944

On the night of the 7th of September, our ships came to anchor off Utah Beach on the Normandy peninsula. We were taken ashore via "LST's". Doubtless to say, we, too, experienced the woes and pains of that so-called "limbering-up" march when just off the boat.

Lt Campbell and DeRose were returned to the organization. They had come via Scotland and England and had crossed the ocean on a well-known ship, the "Isle de France". On the boat with them was Bing Crosby, the nation's favorite popular singer, and many other troops, as well as the advanced detachment of the 104th Inf Div.

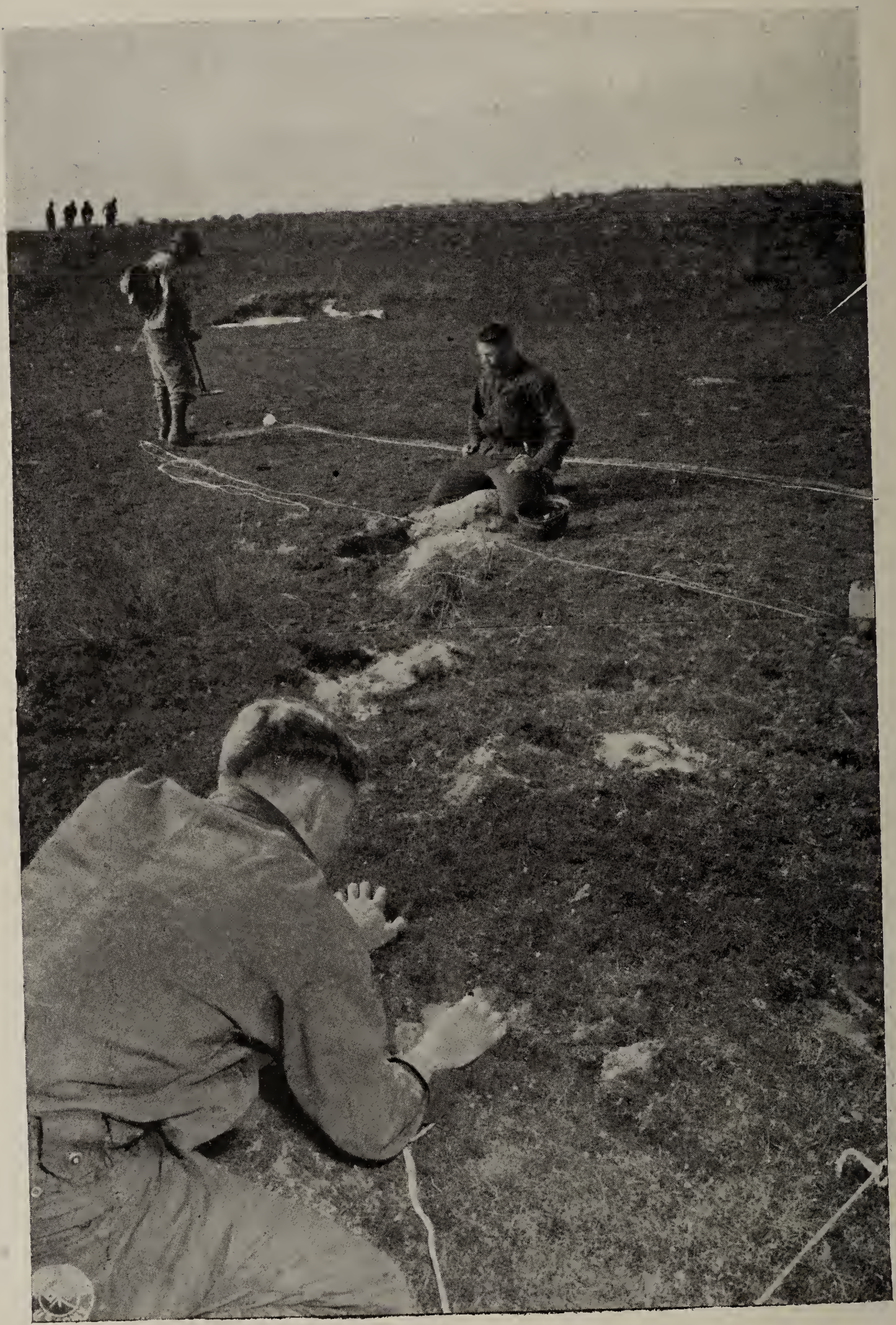
We were bivouaced in the vicinity of Videcosville in "pup-tent camps", the division being strung out along a secondary road, lined with fields, each surrounded by a neat hedge-row, characteristic of the country.

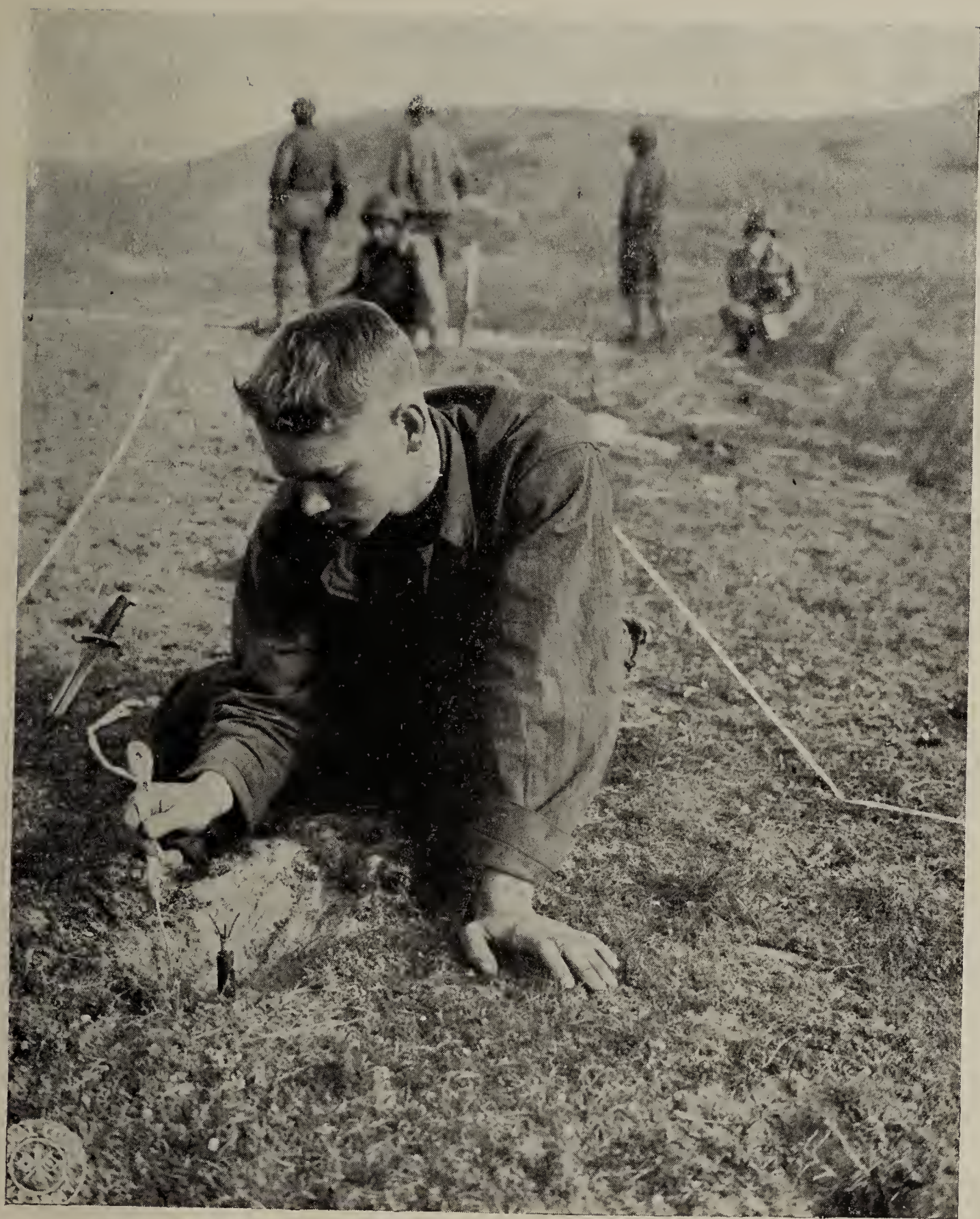
The engineers were the first to leave the division and "go into action". We left on the 13th and moved west to the west coast of the Cherbourg peninsula, and bivouaced just outside the town of Carteret. Our mission here was to clear as many mines as possible from the beaches of Carteret. This we did efficiently and at the cost of a few casualties.

Our company CP in a pyramidal tent near Carteret, France

German sign found on beaches of Carteret.

The following pictures are through the courtesy of the 101st Engineer Combat Battalion photographer. The engineer deactivating the mines is T/5 Gerald Belcher of Paris, Arkansas and the 1st Platoon.





We slowly began to get that funny feeling of having our own men hurt or killed, that certain feeling of knowing that we were actually engaged even though the enemy was nowhere in the vicinity except for a small holding force on the Jersey Islands. Leon Passel was seriously wounded in the face and neck by an S-mine which caused burns and shrapnel wounds. Other men throughout the company and battalion still speak of many narrow escapes during this assignment.

However, an unexpected "good deal" came up just a few days after arriving in Carteret, and that was in the form of two companies drawn from our battalion for the famous "Red Ball Express" which ran a supply route from the beaches of Normandy to the front. The first one was the 26th Infantry Division Provisional Truck Company No 15, with 1st Lt Douglas P Campbell, Jr as its commander. The second was the 26th Infantry Division Provisional Truck Company No 18, commanded by Lt Redheffer of A Company. These two trucking companies were bivouaced outside of the city of Chartres, France, and were respectively known then as Trucking Company No 7201 and Trucking Company No 7203. It was a long route from the bivouac area to the beach, back to the front, and returning to the bivouac area. There was great danger in transporting truck-loads of gasoline, supplies, and equipment, but the boys enjoyed it to a very high degree. However, good things usually don't last long in the Army, and the trucking companies were broken up after two weeks' operations, and sent back to Carteret. Those of us who down-heartedly had to leave the good ol' Red Ball, after being so attached to it, still recall that miserable ride back in the pouring rain, through many a ruined town in France, especially through the unbelieveable ruins of St Lo.

We heard small rumors which stated that we were about ready to go "into the line", that the infantry was already committed. Personally, I looked through the windshield, past the swinging windshield wiper and the rain-drops rushing down the glass, and thought of how the future appeared to me as I looked into the night, down that long, wet, and muddy road . . .

The Red Ball Express Route passed through Paris. Above, one of our men snaps a picture of the Eiffel Tower while passing through.

ROLLING EAST AND INTO THE LINE WITH PATTON

October 1944

We of the trucking companies arrived back to the battalion in the middle of the month, and were immediately placed on the alert for secret movement.

We bade good-bye to Carteret on the morning of the 18th of October. We didn't actually feel so hot. At the end of the day, we pulled into an area in the vicinity of St Mars, France, after having traveled a total of 147 miles by motor convoy. The next day we left bright and early, traveled 138 miles to the vicinity of Longjumeau, France, and bivouaced overnight until the next morning when we left again on a 168-mile trip to the vicinity of Laimont. The next day, the 21st of the month, we arrived "at the front" and settled down in our bivouac area outside the town of Athienville after a jaunt of 102 miles.

The division which would **never** see action had finally been committed. We watched the ambulances go past with wounded men. We occassionally viewed a passing jeep in which wounded or "near-dead" men were being evacuated to the field hospital just across the road. We listened to the near-by artillery pieces being fired all through the night and still some of us couldn't believe that this was actually "it". The morning after arrival, we set up our bivouac area. It was here that we received our first baptism and introduction to that awful and miserable substance called "MUD"! We were to see plenty of it in the days which were to follow. We looked at the rain-water in the bottom of our individual fox-holes and wondered what in hell we'd do if we actually had to use it. We nervously awaited the word to go into action . . . . . .

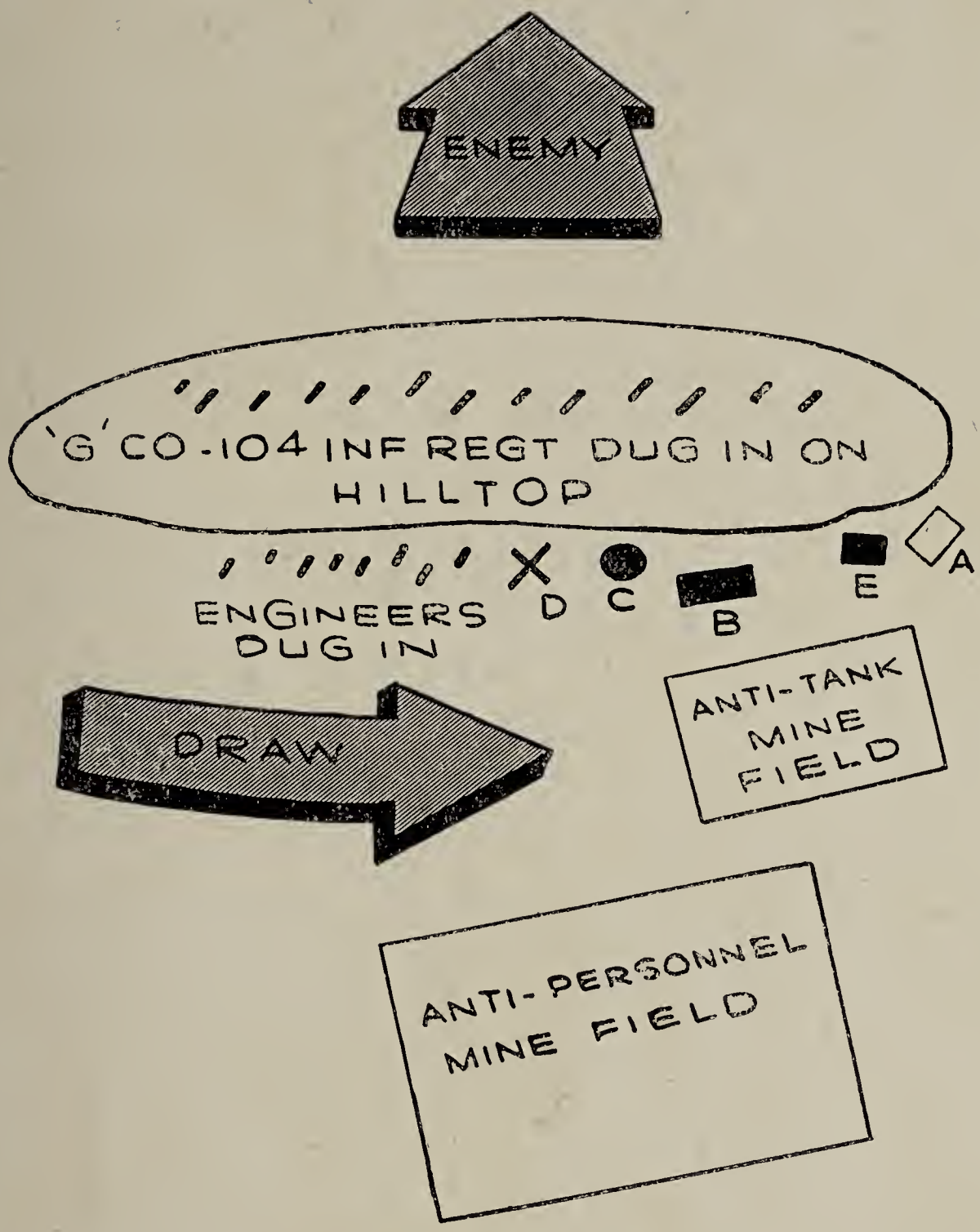
This came on the morning of the 22nd, when Lt George Dicus, the 1st Platoon's Leader was called over to the 104th's 2nd Bn CP. The 1st Platoon moved out that afternoon in support of the 2nd Bn of the 104th Inf Regt.

Our morning report dated "23 October 1944" reads "Courtney, Kenneth S, 32763514, Pvt, MOS 035, dy to Killed in Action in France SSN of dy 050" and below this the "Record of Events" states that the 1st Platoon "cleared minefields in front of the 2nd Bn 104th Inf Regt. Casualties: 1 EM KIA".

How Courtney was killed that day still remains a mystery to those of us who remember. Sgt William Lee, of Hermleigh, Texas, tells it this way:

(With reference to diagram on Page 27.)

"We were being shelled heavily in that draw that night. There were mortars and 88's coming in quite frequently. Every so often, the guards down at E would change, and I'd walk down there to make sure they hadn't fallen asleep. It was pretty cold out there. Well, Courtney was cold, too, and decided he'd take a walk down to the fox-hole at E in order to warm up. He asked a few of the other boys to go along, evidently not realizing the great danger which lay in the area. Noone else wanted to go, so he took off by himself. I waited two hours and he didn't return. In these two hours, more artillery came in and we could hear quite a bit of close-sounding small-arms firing. I finally called Pfc Don Rega, and the two of us started out looking for him. We walked past the infantry outpost at C, down to the engineer guards at E and further on beyond our own minefield at A. We couldn't see him anywhere. Starting back to our dug-in position, Rega discovered Courtney's body at D just beyond the infantrymen at C. Courtney was dead. He had either been shot through the back by a Kraut patrolman, or wounded by shrapnel from the incoming shells. That's all we know."



A—Friendly mine-field

B—knocked-out tank

C—Infantry C P

D—where Courtney was found

E—engineer guards on mine-field (A)

Our company had suffered its first casualty in actual combat. It probably never would have happened hadn't we been so "green". Nevertheless, we were finally in actual combat, and we prayed that He could see us through the worst yet to come . . . . .

Lt Dicus led us into this mission with great courage, it being his first, as well as ours. As we marched into the draw that we shall never forget, wounded infantrymen went past us on their way to the rear. Dead American bodies lay strewn along the enemy-laid mine-field. Our boys were really in there, giving all they had . . . their lives! We also saw our first captured Heinies marching with their hands on their heads at the point of an American weapon. They looked pretty "snorty" to us. We slogged our way through the mud out to our position just behind George Company of the 104 Inf.

The day after Courtney was killed, the 1st Platoon suffered another casualty. This time it was Lt Dicus. He was on his way down to our position in the draw. There was only one entrance to that draw which wasn't plastered with anti-personnel mines and booby-traps, and this safe area was successfully shelled continuously by the Germans. One would hold his breath as he'd approach this section, and sigh with relief after leaving it. Lt Dicus wasn't as fortunate. On his way in, the shells started dropping and he was seriously wounded. The jeep in which he was being evacuated hit a mine, knocking it out, and he was delayed a little longer on evacuation. We heard of this mishap from the officers of Co A who were on their way down to our "hot spot" to relieve us. Late that night, after dark, and with flares lighting the sky for miles around, we started our walk back to the rear where we'd expect to find men of Co A ready to take over our job. The 2nd Squad of the 1st Platoon made its way slowly through the mud. They flopped, or dropped, into the sloshy and soaking mud when they were being shelled. This happened twice on their way in. The men were actually soaked in mud. One would lay there in the mud listening to those shells screaming closer and closer, hitting somewhere close-by, and sending schrapnel zooming past in all directions. Luckily, noone was hurt this time, and we made it back to the barn where the rest of the platoon waited. We slept in this barn that night. The barn itself was hit a couple of times during the night, but to those of us who slept, we didn't even hear or get disturbed by it until we witnessed the results the next morning.

Early the next morning, we loaded up and returned to the Company Area near Athienville. We needed shaves; we were tired; we had a few hair-raising experiences to tell; we were hungry; our bodies and clothes were wet and loaded with mud; AND THE COMPANY, ALL OF US, WERE MOVING OUT TO RELIEVE AN INFANTRY COMPANY IN THE LINE NEAR BEZANGE LA GRANDE!! We were to be ready to leave in twenty minutes! The last drop of any morale within the men of the 1st Platoon vanished into thin air. We left Athienville, traveled approximately four miles into the line in the woods 1 and 1/2 miles north of the town of Bezange La Grande. The 1st Platoon was placed in reserve

as the 2nd and 3rd Platoons were dug into the line at the edge of the woods. Mortars, our own, fired continuously, and a few shells came screaming in after we arrived. It took us a little while to become accustomed to the crack of the firing of the mortars and the distinction between our artillery sounds and the enemy's. Our friendly artillery shells would come whistling over us, making you feel as though they were skinning the hair off your head, but passing over, and landing within Jerry's lines. The more of these one heard, the better he felt. It was the ones coming in the other direction that scared hell out of you and kept you in suspense.

Here in the woods of Bezange La Grande, we experienced life in a combat zone as we had expected it to be. Where the woods came into a clearing, the company, minus Headquarters and 1st Platoon, was dug in. In the valley at the bottom of this clearing ran a river, one which we would sooner or later have to bridge. On the other side of the river lay the enemy, and we could see them getting out of their fox-holes all during the day, sneaking out and in, just the way we did, only with less regard for safety. Here we were, engineers-turned-infantrymen, looking at our enemy just across "No Man's Land".

Lt Campbell took over the 1st Platoon after Lt Dicus was wounded. Lt Wilson was in charge of the 2nd Platoon, and Lt Richard Gannon of the 3rd. A few patrols were sent out in the night. The men slept in their respective fox-holes, each occupied two or even three men. The CP was located in a concrete dug-out, well camouflaged, and protected from dangerous artillery tree-bursts. Our kitchen and staff came right along with us and was situated a few hundred yards down the road in the woods. Hot chow was available to the men out in the line every day. Our company's rear CP and supply point was still back near Athienville. Our trucks were all sent back to that area as soon as we became settled in our new positions.

We remained in these woods for four days. During these four days, we became more and more conscious of the techniques of warfare. We gradually accustomed ourselves to "doing without". We tried to write letters, and enjoy ourselves as much as possible with as little encouragement as there was. On the morning of the 28th of October, we were relieved by the 2nd Bn of the 104th Inf Regt, and we returned to our old area near Athienville.

We remained in this area until the end of the month, bivouaced in pup-tents, and awaiting further orders . . . . . .

Left, Lt Richard X Gannon, of Westboro, Massachusetts, and Platoon Leader of the 3rd Platoon during combat. Right, 1st Sgt Anthony McGinty of Sugar Notch, Pennsylvania, our company's 1st Sgt from way back.

BITTER FIGHTING THROUGH ALSACE-LORRAINE

November 1944

These orders came when the whole Third Army began its great offensive in the early part of November, when rumors had it that the war would certainly be over by Christmas, when fall began turning to winter. Each platoon was sent out in support of the 104th Regt. It was the river that had to be crossed, the one we could see from our positions on the edge of the woods near Bezange La Grande.

The morning report for 5 November 44 reads that the "3rd Platoon left Co to support CT 104", that the 3rd Platoon went to support the combat team of the 104th Inf Regt. Let's take one platoon at a time. The bridging and crossing of this natural barrier was extremely important to the success of the planned operations in this "jump off" . . . . . .

Our "route of advance" lay along the Seille River from below the town of Vic-sur-Seille up along the river for about 1000 yards. At 0400, the artillery barrage started. Hundreds of all-typed shells whizzed over us onto the other bank of the river where the Krauts were well-prepared by now. The river itself distinguished the so-called "line."

The 3rd Platoon moved forward with the 3rd Bn of the 104th Inf Regt on its first offensive mission. The engineers' mission was to clear

the roads of mines and obstacles into the town of Vic-sur-Seille for the tanks which were advancing behind the infantry. No sooner did they reach the outskirts of the town, than the Krauts began throwing them in. They shelled this main road intensely, and five men of our third platoon were seriously wounded by shrapnel. They were Pfc Americo Sciarrabba of Norwalk. Conn, Pfc Michael Tretola of West New York, New Jersey, Pvt Dezzie Bradberry of Texas, Pvt Joseph Yovino of Brooklyn, and Pvt Wallace Corey of Ashland, Massachusetts.

At the same time, the 1st Platoon was building a portable foot-bridge, carrying it, completed, down to the river, and placing it into position for the infantry to cross on its attack. This was taking place at about a distance of 8OO yards upstream from Vic-sur-Seille, with half of the 1st Platoon putting in one foot-bridge, and the other half another, simultaneously.

The 2nd Platoon followed the 3rd Platoon and advanced to the river where they put in a foot-bridge for the awaiting infantry to cross. On the way in, Pfc John D M Shelley of Pennsylvania, was shot through the shoulder by an unobserved sniper, of which there were many lurking in the town.

Our infantry crossed, as planned, at 0530, advancing slowly and courageously up the hills on the other side of the river.

It was beginning to get daylight now, and the 1st and 2nd Platoons in their respective areas beside the foot-bridges, began the rapid construction of floating bridges for vehicles supporting the infantry who were now on the other side and a thousand yards ahead.

The first platoon was being well-shelled since a German observation post only 200 yards away had not been cleared and they could still direct artillery fire into the position of the bridge. Machine-gun bullets could be seen dropping in the water all around the bridge, but no one paid much attention to it. Close-landing shells would stop the work for a few minutes, but it would immediately be continued when the shelling ceased. Mats were laid down across the meadow, leading onto the bridge, and beyond the bridge on the other side. Cordoroy mats, made of logs about 9 feet long and wired together, were also used. The dams upstream had been blown by the enemy and the water rose all day, inch by inch. Two men from the platoon were left there at the bridge site to guard until relief from another engineer battalion arrived. All day long, the Heinies tried unsuccessfully to knock out our bridge. The Krauts over in that observation post kept the bullets flying over, and Pfc Lester Bourgeois of New Orleans, La, had a bullet skin his finger in the fox-hole he was in. At dusk that night, one truck was sent across to clear a minefield up on the hill. At about 2300,8 Nov 44, the 1st Platoon was relieved by the corps engineers.

The second platoon constructed their bridge while the tankers cleared out the town, mopping up stubborn Krauts in many of the buildings. At their bridge-site in the town, lay many dead Krauts. The 3rd Platoon went through clearing mines up the roads on the other side of the river.

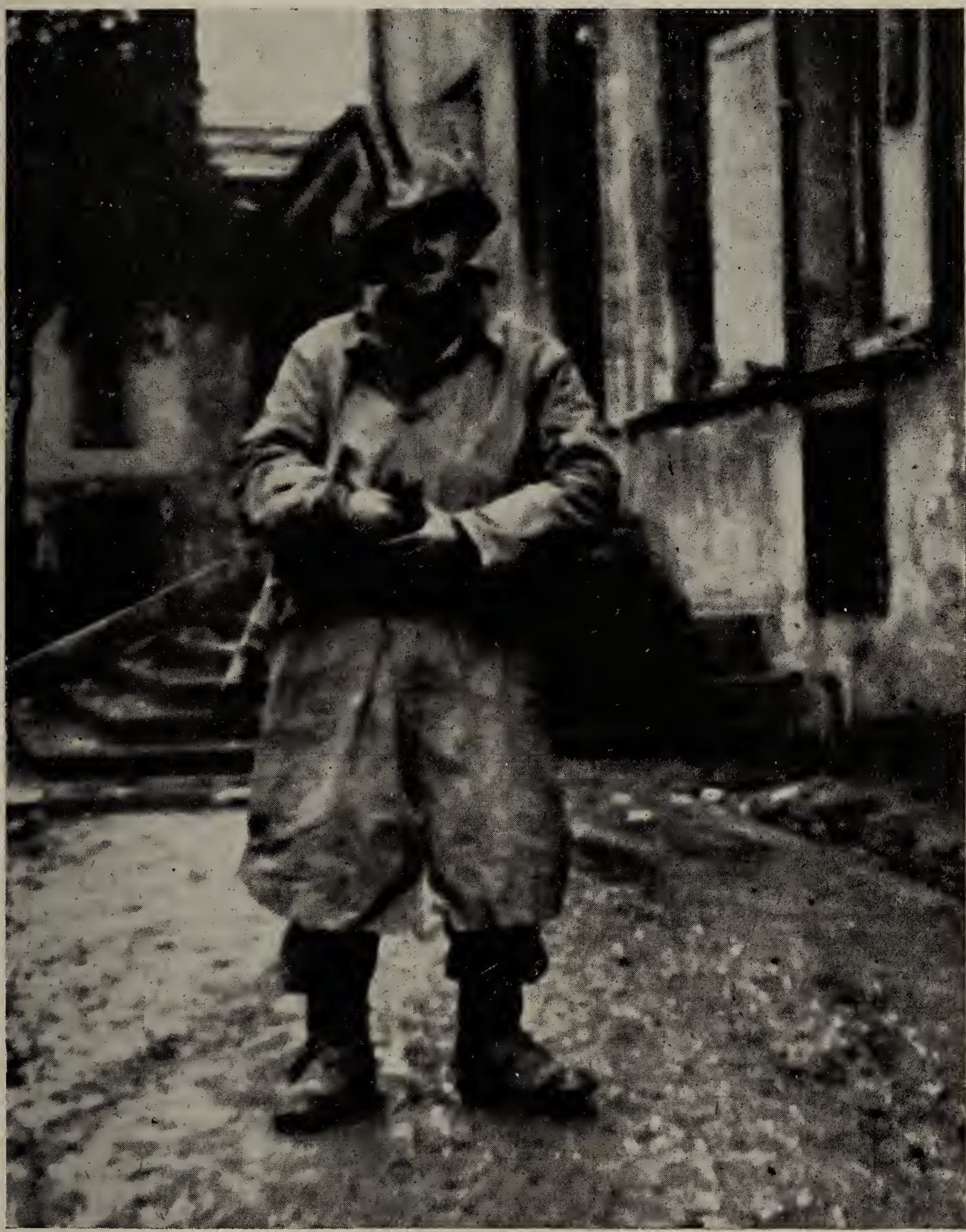
The water was so high at the 1st Platoon bridge-site that all traffic in the vicinity had been diverted to the town of Vic-sur-Seille, where corps engineers had started construction of two Bailey Bridges in the town.

Sgt Anthony Buttino of New York was also slightly wounded in action in Morville les Vic.

The company assembled in the town and the CP was set up in a building shown in the snapshot. Most of the town had been pretty well blasted away. Smashed glass was every-where, and debris. Tankers had to fire large projectiles into the buildings in order to oust the snipers. As we came riding into town in convoy, prisoners in groups of twenty or thirty, some carrying their wounded in improvised stretchers, were being herded to the rear. Each platoon found itself as good a house as could be had and we settled down for a short stay. The 1st Platoon went ahead two miles from the town clearing the roads of mines.

The 3rd Platoon was sent out to clear roadblocks in the towns which the infantry had taken. The next town up was Morville which was the center of practically all German artillery concentrations. Pfc John DelRosso of Hoboken, New Jersey, was standing in the doorway of their billets when a shell came whistling in, hit the building just above where he stood, and plopped into the street . . . a DUD!

Our CP building in Vic-sur-Seille, France, with the Air Compressor in front.



Tec 4 George Bowes of West Caldwell, New Jersey, near the company CP in Vic-sur-Seille. Bowes was wounded in action (shot in the posterior by a sniper) near Aschaffenburg, Germany. He was Capt Spencer's "third man" in the jeep.

While the third platoon took care of the roadblocks up ahead, the 1st and 2nd Platoons were placed on guard at the two Bailey Bridges in the town of Vic-sur-Seille. On the night of the 11th, these two platoons were moved out to maintain a road, then being used continuously. Arriving at the job, they found the road full of deep ruts. A partly-demolished building stood near-by but not for long! It was blasted away and the rock was carried by hand to the ruts and placed in by the men. Until the wee hours of the night, the men worked carrying rock after rock, blasting another wall, ears pricked for sounds of incoming shells, eyes scanning the woods for fear that some wandering Heinies may have found their way to our position. Flares went up now and then, but the surrounding woods afforded enough concealment to the men so that the work was not halted. Fires burned in the surrounding towns, lighting the sky all around them. The job was completed at approximately 0200, and we started back to our trucks, and "home", a house with straw-covered floors in Vic-sur-Seille.

Cpl Francis Voutour of Sommerville, Mass., and Pfc Gerald Belcher of Paris, Ark., were both slightly wounded in action near Vic-sur-Seille on the 11th.

The company CP moved to Hampont on the 13th of the month, where the 3rd Platoon and the 2nd Platoon remained. The 1st Platoon was then sent out to support "Combat Team 104". The 1st went ahead to the town of Chateau-Voue which stood at the top of a fairly-high hill overlooking German opposition. As the platoon approached the town, the shells started coming in, and everyone made for the ditches. When the shelling ceased, they resumed their advance in vehicles into the town which was still being shelled. Once in the town, the men dismounted quickly and the vehicles were parked in selected positions.

Infantrymen were also billeted around the town in various buildings. On the outskirts of the small town, the enemy side, were the dug-in positions of our attached infantry. No sooner did we arrive in the town than an infantryman came running down the main road through the center of town yelling at the top of his lungs words which couldn't be understood, tears streaming down his face. One of our boys stopped him and asked him what the trouble was. His clothes were all covered with mud and dirt. He told us that "a shell just landed in my fox-hole", then took off down the road still crying as loud as he could!

Lt Douglas Campbell, Jr of Maryland was the 1st Platoon's Leader. His driver was Pfc Thomas Pringle of Orange, New Jersey, and the "third man" in the platoon jeep was T/4 Fred Leiss also of Orange, New Jersey. These three spent their evenings down at the infantry battalion CP's. Lt Campbell had become accustomed to having Leiss around with him wherever he went. Leiss was "his boy" and he always came back to the platoon with "fresh dope" about what was going on up front. Leiss was "the Old Man" of his squad, being 32 years old, and he was well-known as a friend of almost everyone in the company. His advice was surprisingly followed by the men of the platoon. All

in all, he was a swell guy. One night, we were eating supper, C-rations and food from the packages we received from home, and the fellows were talking about Lt Campbell and Leiss, who were down at the infantry CP. We used to always get to talking about Leiss because everytime he'd show up, we'd know there was a job for someone coming up. They were talking about how lucky we were to have a man like Lt Campbell leading us. He used his head. The men were all for him. He was an all-round good fellow. Suddenly, they walked in. Holy mackerel, "a job!" we thought. But it wasn't. They were going to stay with us that night. Lt Campbell had received a package from home and he proceeded to pass the contents around to all the fellows. They told us "what the story was" up ahead. The 4th Armored was up there, and were getting relieved to go back for a rest. There was even a field hospital up ahead! But that had nothing to do with the flanks of this "point". The Jerries could still shell us with ease, and we went on holding our breaths through each shelling we received, and there were plenty! One shell hit the hallway in one of our billets just as the men had left it and gone into the cellar for safety. Pfc Philip Branco of Vineland, New Jersey was out getting hens for a big meal. Incidently, we had some pretty good meals up there, cooked by various members of the platoon. Anyway, Branco was coming back to the house with a couple of hens in each hand when the shells started coming in. One 88 came whistling in close, and he hit the ground holding the hens all the while. The hens squirmed and screamed, but Branco held onto them until the barrage had subsided. Those hens made a darn good meal, too!

Out of Chateau-Voue, the 1st Platoon worked on maintenance of roads up to the front. They worked past the ack-ack crews, past the 155 howitzers in the fields, under the wings of the little L-4's, past the armor of the 4th Armored Division.

On the 16th, the 1st Platoon moved to their "take-off" position in Conthil, "take-off" position for the new drive. The morning of the 17th, the drive began, and the company moved into Conthil after the platoon had left in support of the infantry. The 1st Platoon moved to Lidrezing, from where they operated in the "push". The 1st Platoon and the infantry concerned shall never forget **Dordal Farm.**

It was hell.

To add to this "hell", they lost Lt Campell and Leiss, both on the same day!

Dordal Farm was only a small group of buildings which any characteristic farm throughout Alsace-Lorraine possessed. The artillery barrage before the attack had set the farmhouses to burning, and demolished most of the buildings to an inhabitable state. Hogs, cows, horses, goats lay dead all around this "Valley of Death". After two days, they began to stink, an odor which did not help one's spirit. The approach to Dordal Farm had been well mined. Our engineers advanced across the wideopen fields toward the farm. Observation from the enemy was excellent, in that the unit on our right had not been very successful

in their advance. Dordal Farm lay in between the hills in a wide valley. The farm was surrounded by long, flat fields, and one winding road made its way through the farm from the friendly side toward the enemy on the hill on the other side. A railroad ran parallel with the slope of the hill on the other side of the farm, and where the road, a secondary one-and-a-half lane dirt road, overpassed the railroad, the overpass was blown.

The infantry suffered numerous casualties. Our mine-sweeping crews had some pretty close calls. Take Pfc Elmer Egolf, for example. He was sitting on a mowing machine just this side of a building on the farm. He got up and moved over to a safer position since shells had started coming in. An infantry boy came up and sat down on the machine. A mortar landed close-by and killed the infantry boy instantly.

Cpl Francis Saxton of Alliance, Nebraska, was looking out the window of a barn, watching the shells explode outside, when a piece of shrapnel came brrrr-rr-er-ing in his direction and got him on the forehead. He was listed as slightly wounded in action at first, but it was found to be worse upon examination. Casualties were actually pouring to the rear. The medics were so busy that many a poor soul was not able to live through evacuation. Scattered sparsely over the fields were American boys who had been literally "mowed down". Beside each body, the bayonet stuck into the ground, stood a rifle with the dead man's helmet perched on top. Two vehicles blocked the road a little where they had been blown up by mines. One was a loaded two-and-a-half-ton ammunition truck. The other was a jeep of which there wasn't much left. As we sped across the fields on the winding road toward the farm, I couldn't help but wonder if war could be depicted any worse. If it could, I was yet to discover.

That night, the 1st Platoon bridged the gap over the railroad tracks and immediately upon completion, the jeeps loaded with wounded started going over and coming back. The enemy shelled us heavily there that night. They could easily "zero in" on the burning farm.

The company moved into Conthil. The next day Lt Campbell, accompanied by Leiss and Pfc Don Rega of Orange, New Jersey, left Dordal Farm, where the 2nd Bn CP was now located, and moved out across the fields, over a hill, and into the woods of Marimont. It was here that they met their end, while in search of a forward CP. They were shelled. The woods was infested with booby-traps, and Lt. Campbell stepped on one. He and Leiss were both wounded and Rega was sent back in search of a medic. While he was gone, the woods were shelled again. Tree-bursts killed Leiss. Rega returned with a medic, and Lt. Campbell was evacuated. He died on the way through aid stations and hospitals to the rear. We had lost two of our best men.

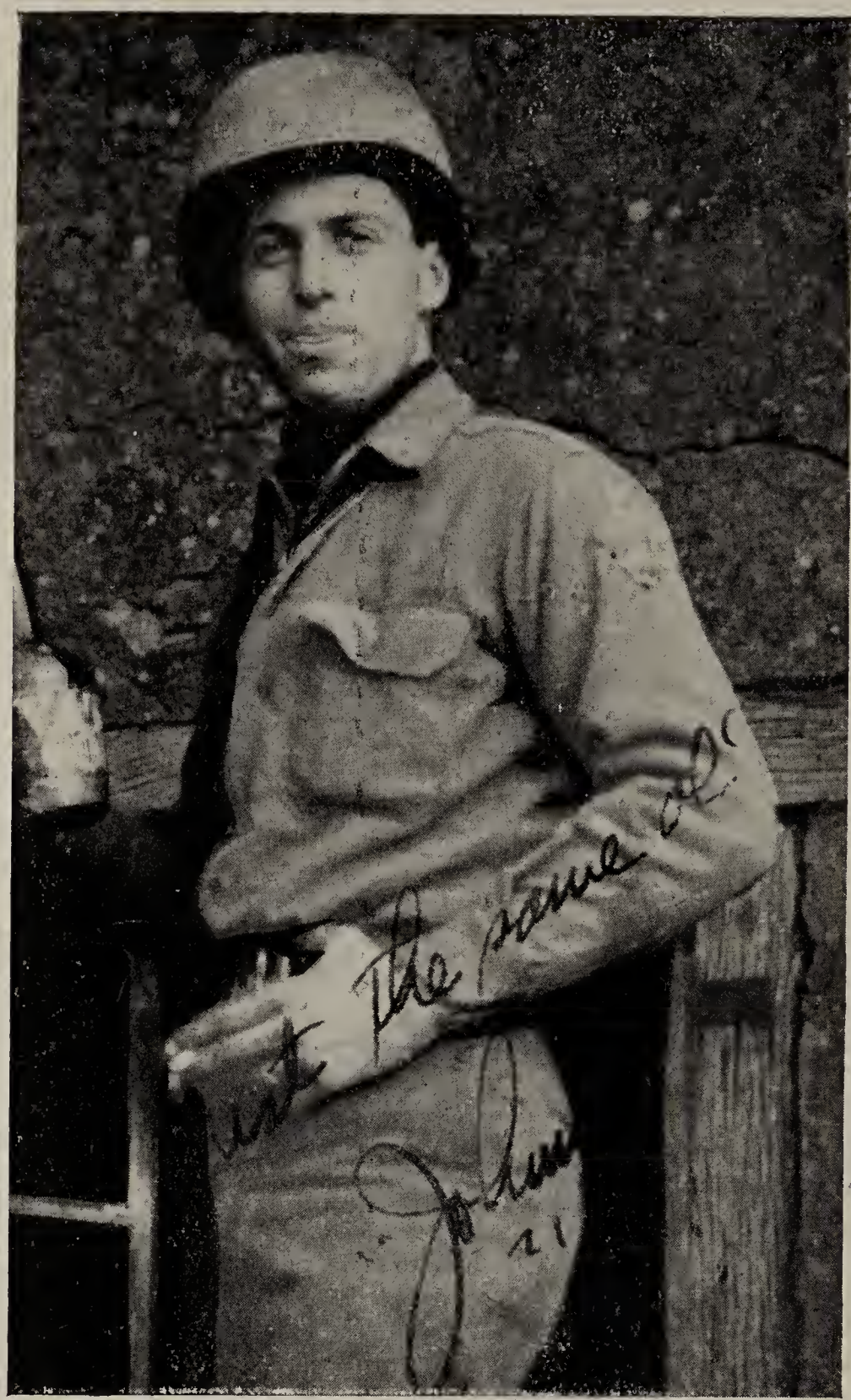
The company CP moved ahead to Marimont - les - Benestroff and the 1st Platoon remained in support of the 104th, building a bypass to a blown railroad overpass near Nébing, assisted by the 2nd Platoon. The

3rd Platoon swept for mines, of which there were a few, on the road into Nébing, where the CP was located for Thanksgiving Day, the whole company present.

Albestroff the town ahead of Nébing, remains another example of tough fighting in our memories. The 3rd Platoon, led by Lt Gannon and S/Sgt Wm Robinson, got the first taste here. They were to sweep the road into the town under cover of darkness. The town had not yet been taken. Half of it was friendly and the other half, enemy. There were three tanks, which had hit mines, knocked out on the road in, and the platoon had detected more mines in the road; then they were suddenly stopped by firing from an enemy observation post. The men manned the guns on the disabled tanks and fired back. An infantry officer, too tired to walk, almost too weak to talk, was found lying in the ditch. He warned of the danger in town. The Krauts had set fire to a barn in which lay numerous American casualties. There was fighting in the streets. The platoon returned with their information to the CP. The infantry was to attack the town the next day, but they were unable to, due to the existence of five enemy tanks in the town, which retreated the following night. Our company cleared the roadblocks in town, and swept the roads clear of mines the following day. When this was completed and Albestroff was clear of enemy, the company moved to the town of Torcheville where the infantry regiment was placed on reserve.

The second platoon was sent out of Torcheville to "remove mines in road and to reconnoitre alternate supply routes in close support of the 104th Inf".

B Company area in Torcheville, France.



Pfc John De Rose, Jr., of the 1st Platoon near Torcheville, France.
The bottle's a "dud" . . . .

We were now in the position to discuss battle situations with other combat-hardened men more freely. We had seen a little more action in November. We were beginning to get over that first awful feeling that grasps green men on the battlefront, that fear of sudden death or injury, thinking of that, and only that. We were beginning to think more clearly in the line of largescale operations, how the whole Army, consisting of

various smaller units way down to the individual squad, works together, which, when assembled, resulted in a large full-scale operation. We started to see how we fitted into the picture. That first-hand fear took the back seat and we began to realize that the quickest way to get back home would be by giving all we had....

THE BEGINNING OF THE WINTER COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

December 1944

On the afternoon of the 1st of December, it became evident that our rest, or period of reorganization, was over, when the 2nd and 3rd Platoons moved out.

Early the next morning (0500), a radio message from Capt Spencer ordered us to leave early that morning and join the rest of the company at a factory, or flour-mill, in the town of Diedendorf. We arrived at the mill just at daylight, had breakfast, and prepared to resume our position in support of the 104th Inf Regt.

The 1st and 3rd Platoons were assigned to the support of the 104th, and they moved on to Pisdorf, approximately 2 miles up the river. Our route of advance was northward toward the large city of Sarre-

In front of our CP at the mill in Diedendorf, France. Left to right: T/5 Arthur Ellison, the Mail Orderly, Lt Edward Wilson, 2nd Platoon Leader, Pfc Charles Stouch, ass't jeep driver, later wounded in action, the battalion chaplain, T/5 Joe Carrero, jeep driver for 2nd Platoon, S/Sgt Carmine Pionegro, supply sergeant, and T/5 Dick Enright, Chaplain's Ass't.

Union. In Pisdorf, the two platoons awaited orders, while the 2nd Platoon left Diedendorf and moved to Wolfskirchen, 1 mile away.

The fight for Sarre-Union was on, and the engineers had alot of work to do. The 2nd Platoon was in reserve in Wolfskirchen. The 1st Platoon went into the "hot town" of Sarre-Union on the night of the 4th with Capt Spencer. They cleared a road of mines on through the enemy-infested town to the other side. Artillery became more and more concentrated on the town during the night. Screaming meemies and 88's were frequent visitors to the blasted resort. The men went along with their mine detectors, ducking into doorways when the shells came too close. One crew ducked into a **Kraut-managed** establishment, not knowing it until they were told about it by some infantrymen, after leaving it!

Sarre-Union was hell for anyone having anything to do with it. Our engineers found themselves in the midst of a tank battle the next day. The infantry pulled back into the town. New reinforcements were being taught how to operate the bazooka when a Kraut tank was reported coming down the road. Our tank destroyers pulled up, thank God, and blasted away at the enemy tank in front of the house, which stood dangerously on the corner. The buildings all around were accurately

Capt Roger Q Spencer, Company Commander, of Ft Worth, Texas, who led men of the 1st Platoon into Sarre-Union the first night . . .

being punctured by 88's. A sniper down the road kept firing down the street at the Americans. The bullets picked at the corners of the buildings, sending pieces of concrete in all directions. Artillery barrages continued, and the Krauts had the town's square fairly-well zeroed in, so well that they plopped them into the square time and again. The 3rd Platoon came in to join the 1st in the town. The platoons moved in their vehicles and stayed overnight until the next day when things were quieter and the company and second platoon moved in to set up. A defensive position was taken up around the town and the engineers were missioned to mine all roads leading into the town, except those in actual use. All platoons chipped in here, and the mines were dug into the bituminous roads. The enemy was retreating and Sarre-Union smouldered away in its ruins . . . .

It was here that we met our new lieutenant. The first platoon had operated without an officer since Lt Campbell's death. Now, into the company came an officer transferree from the 145th Engr Combat Bn, Lt James R Malone of South Dakota.

Shortly thereafter, the 1st Platoon was sent out to improve a by-pass across the Eichel River in the vicinity of Oermingen, France, in the night while a corps engineer unit built a Bailey Bridge on the main road out of town toward the front.

The second platoon swept the road out of Sarre-Union to the woods of le Bodenwald. The 2nd Platoon was also responsible for clearing the débris off the streets of Sarre-Union assisted by the bulldozer. Men of the 2nd Platoon tell of this afore-mentioned mine- sweeping mission. From where they stood at the end of their job, they could observe the enemy retreating en masse in the opposite direction.

The 3rd Platoon cleared the mines and log obstacles from the road between Sarre-Union and Oermingen. This road ran through a forest of large logs which the enemy used to their best advantage for slowing us up. The logs were as much as two or three feet in diameter and the trees very long.

Until these obstacles were cleared from the traffic route, our forces were held up. However, it was the prime mission of the engineers to keep the troops rolling, come hell or high water, and "hell and high water" did come many a time. Obstacles were removed with greater care and ease as more experienced methods were developed.

In the meantime, Co Hq had moved from the mill at Diedendorf to Sarrewerden, the town just before Sarre-Union, and then into Sarre-Union itself.

We were slowly approaching the famous Maginot Line, which had been reported to be heavily defended. Lectures on how to attack pillboxes and bunkers were being given to infantry officers.

We first saw the defenses of the Maginot Line near the town of Aachen, France. The 1st Platoon had been sent out to destroy a few captured pillboxes which had been reported cleared. To the surprise of the men who went up to these bunkers, **they were not cleared!** The

enemy opened fire on the men, and T/5 Richard Heinrich of Wallington, New Jersey, captured two prisoners, bringing them back at the point of his BAR. "Dick" was the platoon's tool corporal. When the pill-boxes were finally made safe, mostly through the action of our men, the engineers advanced and destroyed them with demolitions.

The last location of our company CP in this sector was at Etting, France, a few miles from the French-German border, at which we arrived on the 9th of December. For the next two days, the 1st Platoon was attached to the 1st Bn of the 104th clearing mines behind the advancing troops, strengthening a bridge at Gros-Rederching, and blasting. The 87th Inf Div patch began to replace the YD's patch in the vicinity. Maj Gen Eddy, the XII Corps Commander, had been up to observe on the line, and had mentioned to our officers that we were to be relieved. This rumor was not accepted as true when first heard. The men were a little skeptical about it. The 87th's vehicles continued to replace ours and our units started toward the assembly points in the rear. QM trucking companies were around to transport our non motorized troops. Our company assembled in Etting on the 11th and was relieved from support of the infantry the next morning by the 87th's engineer battalion. The old "Acorn Division" we used to know back in Fort Jackson days had relieved us. This was to be their first action. We spoke to them as veterans would. We kinda felt a little cocky and high hatted. We warned them to remove their stripes since the Jerries would pick the guy with the most stripes to shoot at. We looked at their rather-new vehicles; then looked at our own. What a difference! Their clean artillery pieces moved into position near where our artillery emplacements were. The road was a one-way job, and traffic was heavy in both directions. What the hell did we care now; we were on our way for a rest!

We arrived in Metz on the 12th of December. At first, the streets and environs seemed a little too confused to bother with. The city itself was still in a lull characteristic of a town through which war had passed. However, Metz was not as badly damaged as we'd expect it to be — there were beaucoup buildings and good ones, too. The battalion was billeted in a large schoolhouse just one block away from the Moselle. The bridges of the Moselle had been blasted by the retreating Germans just a couple of weeks before, and, as a matter of fact, the 101st Infantry Regiment took the last fort in the vicinity of Metz, that being Fort Jeanne D'Arc. Taken were some highranking German officers and "key-men."

We had arrived for a rest. Rumors had it that we'd be fortunate enough to remain there for Christmas, but, oh, how things were soon to change!

We were given passes. Mass was held at the famous Metz cathedral on Sunday. Beer could be bought in the small cafe's. Passes were abundant. But there was a curfew to deal with. Some of the company

METZ . . . Above, a shot in front of the Metz Cathedral in early December when the YD arrived for a rest period. Below, we cross the Moselle River in the heart of Metz over a Bailey Bridge.

worked on rifle ranges for the infantry. Machine guns were practice-fired. Reinforcements came in and we tried to get as much rest as possible.

Up north, in Luxembourg, things were pretty hot. We listened to the radio and rumored that our rest would be cut short to go up into the new "Battle of the Bulge". Von-Runstedt had suddenly counter-attacked and advanced deep into our lines. The situation seemed to be quite serious. But no, we were scheduled to stay at Metz for 30 days, so the rumors said! Yeah, we moved out the 20th of December . . . . to Luxembourg and the tough Battle of the Bulge.

Winter was here now, and every break on the way found us jumping around trying to keep warm. We rode for miles and miles, observing no destruction of war, simply a rather peaceful-looking country of a different nature. There were hardly any manure piles, so characteristic of our days in France, at least not on the main highways we traveled on. The further north we went, the colder it seemed to get. But this was just a touch of what was yet to come!

We were again placed in support of the 104th Inf Regt.

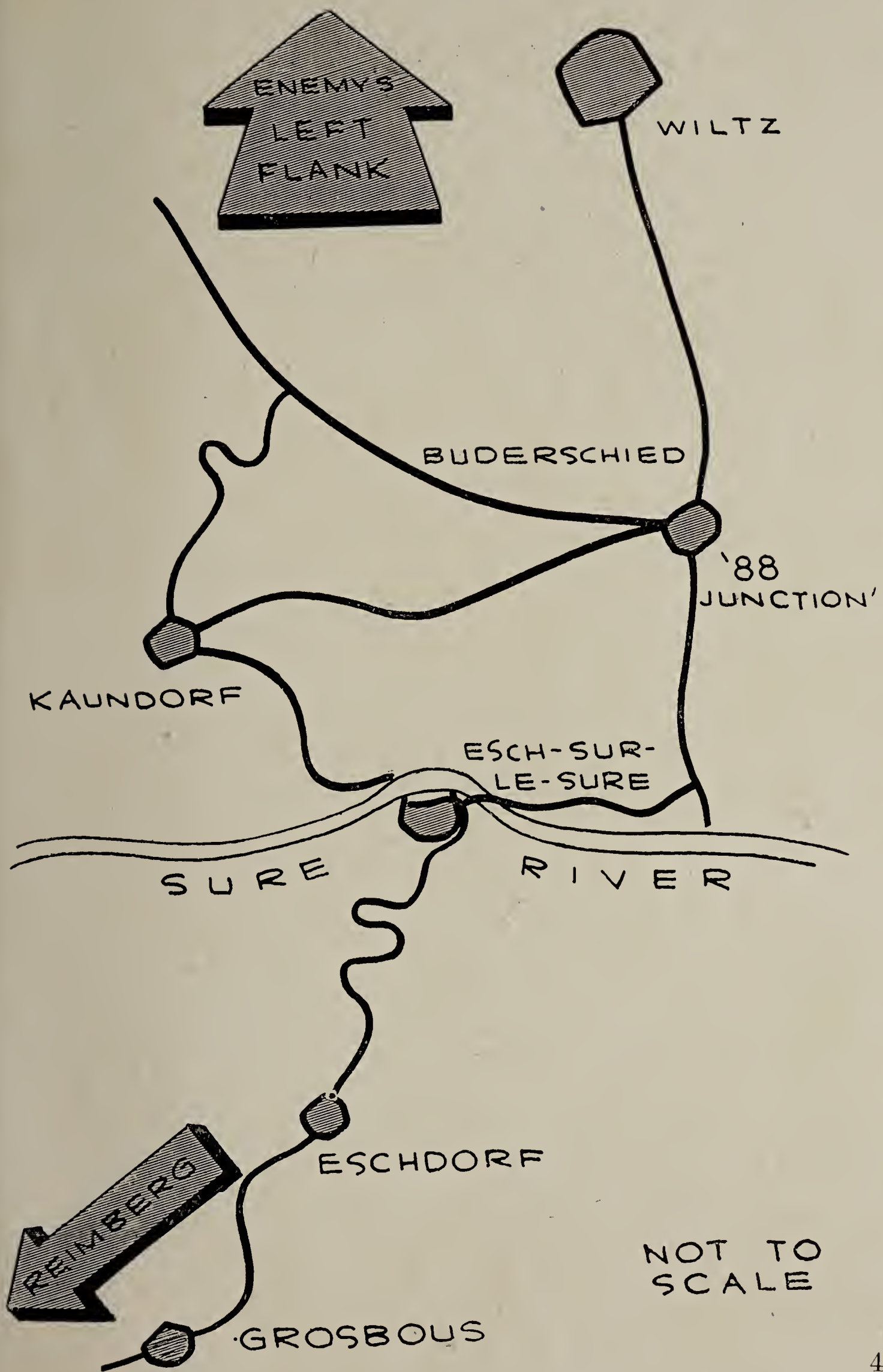
Our Co CP was set up at Mon Bichler, but only for about a day. This was merely a little delay while other troops went ahead to encounter the positions of the enemy. Camouflage was extremely important here as the Germans were using all the air power they could scrape up.

The morning of the 22nd, we moved ahead with the infantry. It was easy-going at first. No Krauts. No firing. No 88's. Just a walk ahead. Gas-masks were issued while on the march. Then suddenly, came the whistle, the old familiar scream of the incoming shells, the rapid small-arms fire, and the flow of our casualties to the rear. Tanks came back riddled with bullet holes. We had encountered the enemy. We were back in the fight again, **three days before Christmas!**

The Germans were fighting fiercely. On our first day of engagement, the snow came down cold and wet. We could spot the infantry advancing across the snow-covered fields, wrapped in overcoats and blankets, moving over white fields dotted with shell holes, plenty of them. Just before the town of Grosbous, we encountered a stubborn pocket who chose to fight it out rather than surrender. A patrol of the 104th had advanced into the woods, and did not return. They were found dead later, beside the dirty Krauts who had been shelled so heavily the preceding afternoon. This pocket was carefully by-passed the night of the 22nd, and in order to do so, the 1st Platoon built a bridge and swept clear into the town of Grosbous during a much-hated night attack. This was on the night of the 23rd-24th.

Christmas Day was spent in Grosbous, Luxembourg, with the whole company present for their Xmas dinner.

The following map, unreliable and simple as it may be, will give the reader a clearer understanding of our action in this zone:


ENEMY'S
LEFT
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KAUNDORF
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LE-SURE
SURE
RIVER
ESCHDORF
REIMBERG
GROSBOUS
NOT TO
SCALE

Pfc Joe Tarantola of New York City and the 2nd Platoon tells us about the first engineers to go into Eschdorf:

"The first engineers to go into Eschdorf were Cpl Clyde Raymond (from Virginia), Pvt Bernard Bogart (of Hoboken), and Pfc John Gordnick (of West New York, NJ). Two mine detector crews were detailed to go with the attacking infantry. I was a member of the other crew. The one mentioned above was the voluntary crew who went ahead into Eschdorf, under heavy small-arms and artillery fire. We had cleared a road for a couple of miles, finding no mines. Cpl Raymond with Bogart and Gordnick, went ahead with the infantry, with utter disregard for their own safety, cleared the road right into Eschdorf, while dodging everything that flew their way. They also salvaged some bazookas and small-arms weapons which were lying around. A couple of our burning tanks and the bodies of dead Americans and Krauts we witnessed as results of a fierce battle. Raymond, Bogart, and Gordnick were each put in for the award of the Bronze Star for meritorious service in combat."

By this time, the snow had been falling continuously. Enemy planes paid us a most welcomed visit nearly every day, and the funniest part about it was that they usually came to stay . . . . . in flames, after being shot down!

Around noon on Xmas Day, the 1st Platoon was suddenly surprised by the sudden and unexpected roar of an approaching plane, and a terrific explosion. A civilian woman came running into the house, screaming "American" at the top of her lungs. We grabbed our rifles and took off for the "site" where one of our B-2b's had made a crash-landing. The plane was scattered throughout the field in little parts and pieces. The gas had caught fire and was stilll burning when we arrived. Some of the crew had bailed out on the way down. We turned away with lumps in our hearts. Quite the incident to remember this Christmas by!

The 3rd Platoon was sent out to remove German vehicles off the road leading into Eschdorf. I shall never forget my first ride into the town of Eschdorf. Lt Malone, myself, and the driver were being followed by the 1st Squad, lead by Sgt Wm Lee. We came up to where Sgt Vincent E Bunce's squad of the 3rd Platoon was working on removing a Kraut tank from the road. We heard the roar of an incoming plane, and almost immediately, the explosion of a bomb. We stopped the vehicle . . . well, we tried to stop (so what if we jumped out before the vehicle stopped?) and made for the field. The planes came in one after the other and our flak and ack-ack went up with a deafening sound. The enemy planes were apparently trying to bomb our artillery emplacements in the vicinity, and only about 800 yards from where we were, which wasn't too safe a place for any sane man. The fields did not afford too much camouflage since they were snow-covered and we were dressed in noticeable OD. However, there was quite a number of shell holes in the area and we made ourselves comfortable in them

until the excitement was over. We resumed our ride into town, which was only a few miles away. Eschdorf sat at the top of a hill overlooking the Sure River. The hill was one of the highest in that vicinity, and a wonderful artillery target, so we witnessed! The buildings were demolished beyond recognition. We approached the town with care on the slippery road. A few hundred yards before the town, the most awful sights of war began to appear. The bodies, scores of them, lay there lifeless in the cold snow, the blood easily recognizeable against the clean white snow. There were many dead Germans wearing "sniper's capes", one side of green camouflage and the other white for winter combat. Our American boys were also sprawled over those fields where they had fallen. Out of the whole picture, one could almost visualize the battle that took place there just a few hours before. The Americans must have been approaching the town of Eschdorf at the top of the hill, fighting for every inch of it, when the Krauts attacked, coming down the hill in their white suits. The results standing there before uswere terrible. We passed it without saying a word. We approached the town, where we could spot our infantry digging in on the other side, overlooking the river. German tanks were everywhere, where they had been knocked out by our accurate artillery and bombing. Bodies of their occupants were still smoldering as they burned to cinders. Some of the bodies were hanging over the side of the turret and on the ground. There wasn't much left of some of them. We entered Eschdorf, and Sgt Lee's squad went out to clear a road of mines. Pfc Elmer Egolf of Hagerstown, Maryland, had lost his rifle somewhere along the road. He decided to go over to the aid station in search of a replacement. As he looked through a pile of rifles a Kraut plane came in, firing at the town. "Pop", as Egolf was called, stuck his rifle out the window and fired, ducking back just in time to miss a machine gun bullet which hit the wall behind him!

Eschdorf was then a busy town, or what was left of it was. Our tanks moved in, and the 102nd Artillery set up its 105's just outside the town. Infantry CP's moved in. Our company moved in the day after Xmas. The engineers were kept pretty busy clearing the roads of road-blocks and mines. The CP was located here until the end of the month.

There were no rumors now. This was turning out to be real tough fighting. The men had their skins to worry about. There was no time for talk. There was too much time for action, now, while it was needed. There was a river to cross up ahead, and sooner or later it would be our turn to bridge, a job we looked forward to with uneasiness. Metz was gone and forgotten. We were back in there beating back Von Runstedt's latest daydream. And another year came to an end....

This is a good example of what was left of some of the buildings in Eschdorf.

One of the many knocked-out German tanks in Eschdorf.
This one happens to be Tiger Royal.

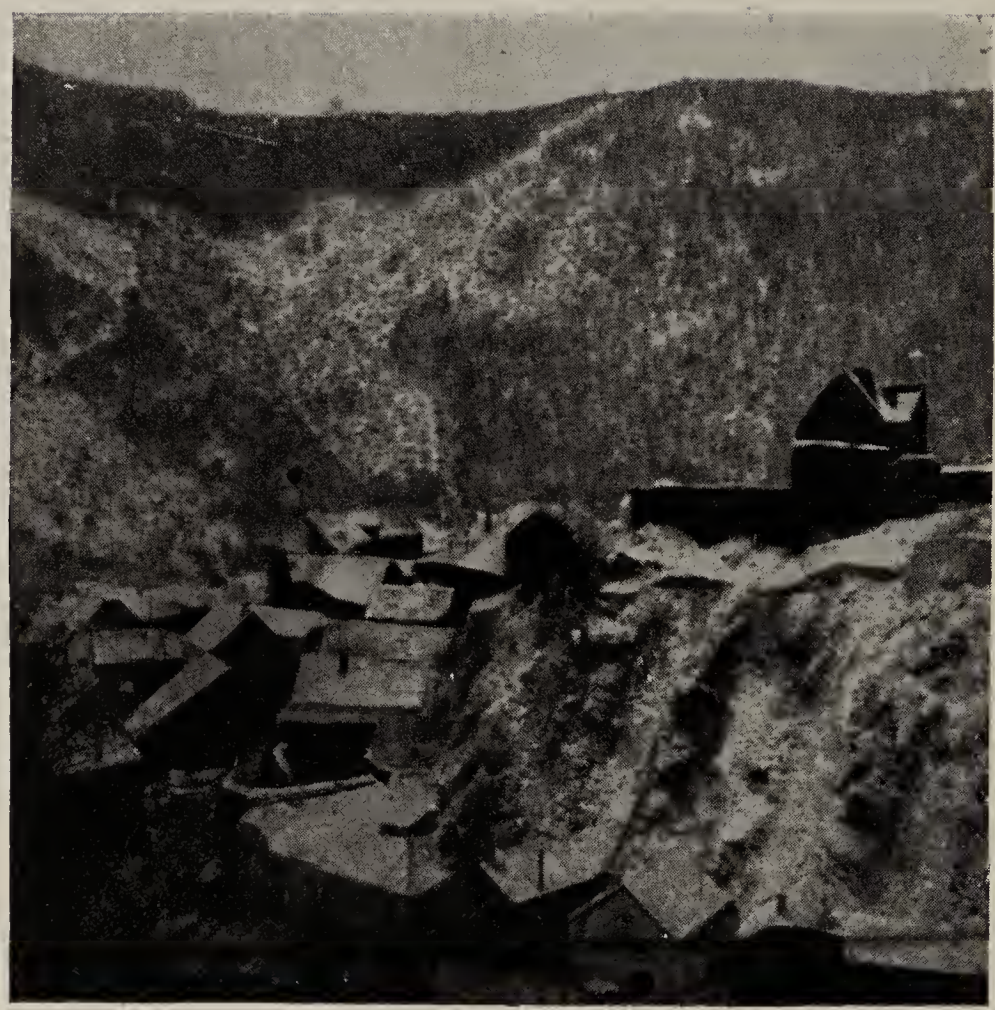
Our vehicles were all white-washed for camouflage purposes, to blend in with the snow background during the Battle of the Bulge. This snapshot shows Pfc Joseph Cosentino, truck driver of the 2nd Squad, 1st Platoon, and from Orange, NJ, just before starting out on a job. Most of the white-wash has been washed away.

THE WINTER COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

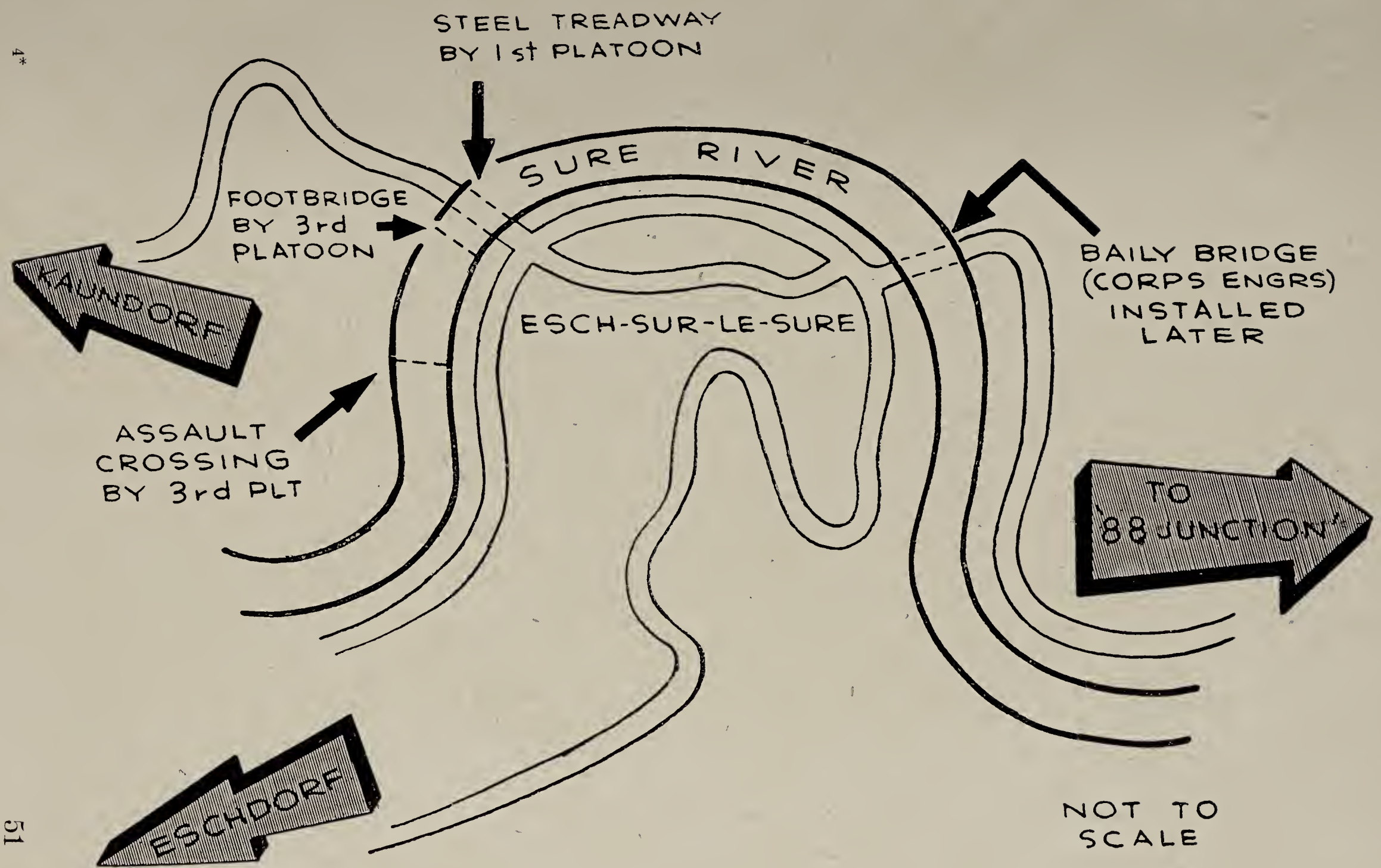
January 1945

As I stated before, there was a river to cross up ahead. We scanned over the maps of the area and accumulated some very important information about the terrain along that river. The following photograph will give the reader a clearer understanding even though the river itself is not shown. The river runs along the hollow of the valley from the bottom right of the picture along the buildings toward the left, curving to the right along the unseen valley in the center of the picture (right). The town is called Esch-sur-le-Sure, "Sure" being the name of the river.

Infantry patrols were sent into the town to reconnoiter the two bridges, one on either side of town. Captain Spencer tried a new method of using an L-4 observation plane and swooping down as close as he could to take in as much of the bridges as could be seen. The two bridges had been blown, and the enemy had started its retreat over the hills on the other side of the river. The infantry awaited its order to



Esch-sur-le-Sure was a little "hell" in itself.
Ask anyone in Baker Company and they will certainly agree to that fact.


STEEL TREADWAY
BY 1st PLATOON
SURE RIVER
FOOTBRIDGE
BY 3rd
PLATOON
KAUNDORF
ESCH-SUR-LE-SURE
BAILY BRIDGE
(CORPS ENGRS)
INSTALLED
LATER
ASSAULT
CROSSING
BY 3rd PLT
TO
"88 JUNCTION"
ESCHDORF
NOT TO
SCALE

attack, and so did the engineers whose responsibility it would be to bridge the river for the attacking tanks and following vehicles. The road leading into town was a slippery winding road all the way down the side of the steep terrain. It was the same way leading out of the town into enemy territory. The town itself was so deeply set into the valley that at first sight one would never expect any artillery being able to fall in on us. But how wrong we were!

I asked one of the members of the 3rd Plat about his first experience concerning this town. He was Pfc Walter Novotny of Palisades, New Jersey: "Jackie (Cpl Jack Ehrlich of New Rochelle, NY), Pro (Pfc Sam Provo of North Agawam, Mass.) and Levy Havard (of Texas). We got into Moe's peep (Moe is T/5 Morris Reisberg of Irvington, NJ.) and Lt Gannon, took two rubber boats with paddles and drove down behind the infantry (Fox Company) and followed them down to the edge of the woods overlooking the valley. We got out of the jeep and walked down through the woods, slipping and sliding along as we hung on to the boats, until we came to the bottom. We were in the town. When we got there, we found some assault boats that had been used. In the town, there was an American recon car which had been captured by the Krauts and marked with their black cross. There was also an M-4 tank in the like manner. These captured and 'liberated' vehicles were right behind where we were working. Our mission here was to row the heavy weapons section across the river so that they could set positions up on the other side. We got two boat loads across, when we were fired on by enemy machine-gun fire. Poor Levy almost got trampled to death as the infantry made a mad dash for it! We hid behind the recon car, Levy and I, and some infantry. One by one we were told to get into the near-by cellars. The bullets were hitting all around the entrance to the cellar in which we were. Infantrymen set up their mortars in the street in front of us, and silenced the gun after a while. Jackie got stuck between two buildings while dodging the bullets. After the firing ceased, we all came out and moved on to another position for the river-crossing. Instead of rowing them across, Levy and I got into a boat near where a wire had been strung across previously for an unknown reason, while Jackie and Pro assisted from the shore. We shuffled the troops across along the wire. Every two trips we had to take the boat ashore and bail it out. It was so cold that our gloves stuck to the wire. One infantryman fell overboard and through the ice while getting out of the boat. We got out of there as fast as our mission was completed. I think Esch-sur-le-Sure was the most beautiful place I've ever been in the ETO. On our way back, we decided to walk. Jackie got a lift in a peep to go back to Eschdorf to get a vehicle for us. So, we trudged all the way up the mountain, and all of a sudden we heard a shot. We were so tired, that we couldn't get any lower than just falling to our knees. But the shot wasn't from a sniper. Somehow or other, Pro's rifle got mixed up with his cartridge belt, and fired accidently. Jackie never came back with a

vehicle for us. We managed to sneak a ride on a 3/4-ton back into Eschdorf."

While this crew was ferrying the infantry across, a foot-bridge was being constructed by the 2nd Squad of the 3rd Platoon under Sgt Vincent E Bunce of Greenwich Village, NY. Sgt James Brown of South Carolina called DelRosso over to tell me the story about this foot-bridge they built. John DelRosso is from Hoboken, New Jersey. This is how he told it to me:

"Well, most of this story you know anyway — we swept down into the town. When we got to the edge of the river, we started putting the floats (sections of a footbridge) together. Then, we'd hand them to Ack (Pfc Anthony Acquaviva, also of Hoboken, NJ) and Obie (T/5 Harold O'Brien of Manhattan, NY). Bunce called me over to the other side of the river to put in some pickets on the enemy shore. We had no tools, but made use of rocks. Then we came back across when the bridge was completed and the infantry came thru, 8 paces apart. After that, Ack, Obie, and Mathews (T/5 Charles Matthews of Brooklyn, NY) fell into the river. We took them into a house to dry up, where a civilian woman gave us something to eat. This was when Bunce came in with further orders which stated that we had to go on up over the hill on the other side of the river with the infantry, sweeping the roads for mines. On our way back from this mine-clearing job, an Infantry lieutenant stopped us and congratulated us on the good job. He said he had never expected to find the bridge up already! We returned to Eschdorf at about 8 in the night."

The 1st Platoon came into town just after the footbridge had been completed, and Sgt Harry A McMillian's 3rd Squad placed in a tread-way bridge across the gap of the blown bridge on the west side of town. "Mac" hails from Los Angeles. The excitement of the first attack across the river had died down by then, and the civilians started sticking their heads out of their homes in curiousity. Below is a picture of the treadway bridge which the 1st Platoon constructed. The engineers shown are members of the 249th Engr Combat Bn, who were then our supporting engineers. However, our engineers had also placed charges of "composition C", a new and good explosive. There seemed to be possibilities of counter-attacks and a defensive position was set up while an objective situation was still going on. The buildings in the back-ground were hit time and again by enemy shell fire. By the time we moved ahead from Esch-sur-le-Sure, only charred ruins remained where these buildings once stood.

Above is a photograph of a Bailey Bridge built over the Sure at Esch-sur-le-Sure.
There were two bridges blown at "Esch".
One was made passable by the treadway bridge shown in the preceding photograph...

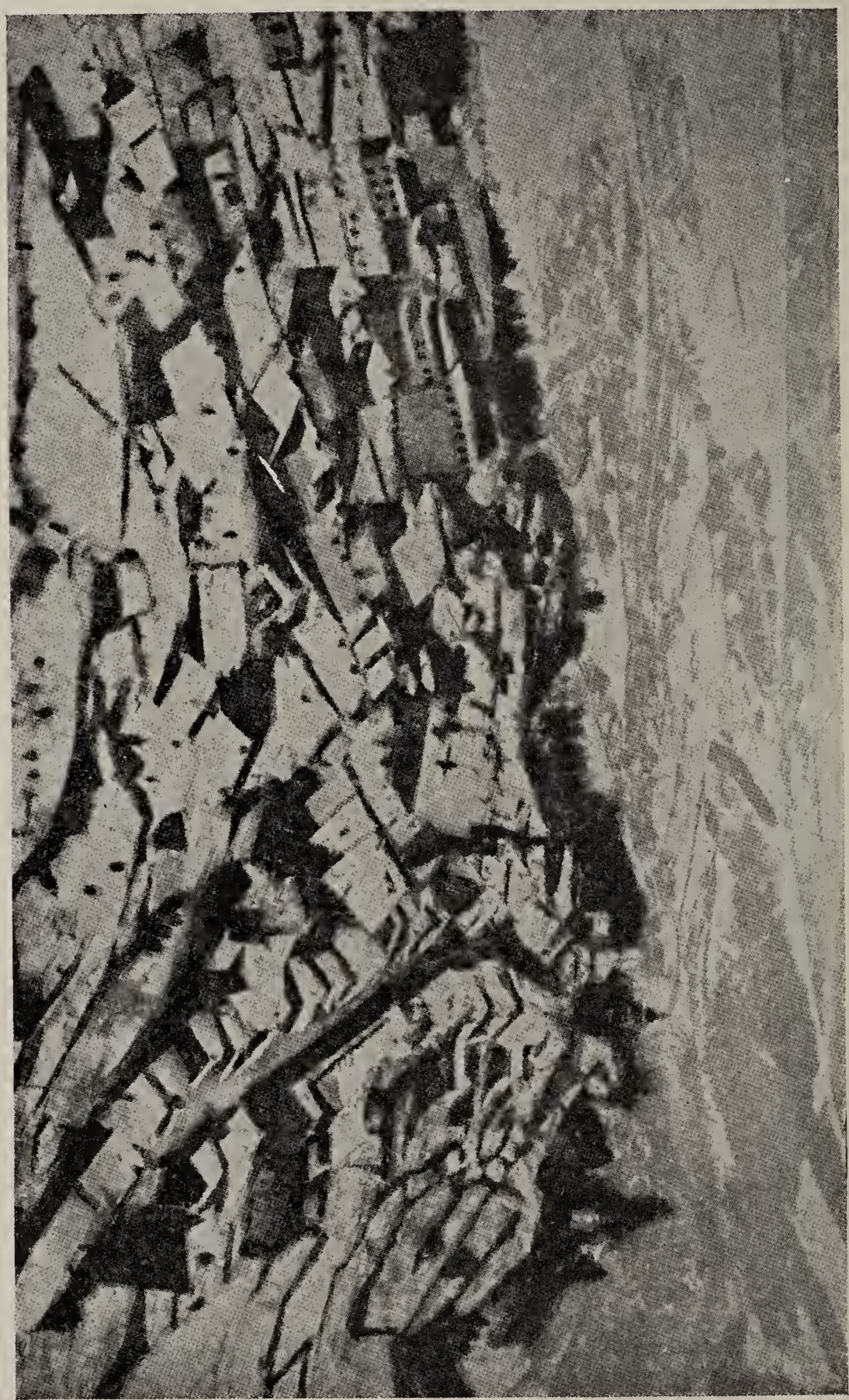
...the other, the one above, was bridged by the supporting "Corps Engineers", the 249th, after the traffic over one bridge had to be relieved.

Above is a water point for the 104th Inf Regt. This area was always under enemy artillery fire. Shell holes dotted the surrounding area. Mortars dropped in here continuously. The steep rise on the other side of the river is very characteristic of the terrain. This is near Esch-sur-le-Sure, Luxembourg, and the men shown are all from our Headquarters Company.

Our company remained in support of the 104th Inf Regt, according to the Morning Report dated the 1st of January, 1945. As has been stated before, "Esch was hell!". It certainly was. Most of our company CP moved into Esch on the 2nd of the month. By then, the enemy had started letting them come in. Shells came screaming clear over the high surrounding hills, and landed in the town. There wasn't too much shelling during the daytime. But, at night, everything except the kitchen sinks of Wiltz, our objective, came flying in; how shells could clear those hills and get down into that valley puzzled us. But they came in time and again. We began to feel that it was safer up on the front lines. Not that we didn't pay the front lines any "visits". We were continuously being called out on jobs of one sort or another, from minesweeping to peparing abatis's. Our "cat", a D-7 bulldozer, had to remain back in Eschdorf, as the curves in the road leading to Esch-sur-le-Sure were too sharp. Following is a snapshot of our "cat" in one of its many situations. This time, however, it is trying to get through a roadblock. The 6-ton's driver, professional at his terrific job, is T/5 George Leonard of New Jersey. The so-called "flat bed" is the trailer on which the "cat" is carried or transported from one location to another. The second picture shows the "flat bed" with the "cat" on it.

There are so many stories one could recount concerning our "cat". These will come out in this book as we go along, but it is well to note some of the jobs with which the "cat" was involved here in the Battle of the Bulge. The cat was used for snow-plowing. It was used to remove knocked-out German vehicles from the road. It was used to clear debris out of the streets. It was even used to remove dead horses and other lifeless animals from the roads. The D-7 was finally "wounded in action" when it hit a mine near Wiltz. T/5 John Johnson of Hoboken, N. J., was the operator then. His assistant on this particular job was T/5 Cedric Marshey of Vermont. They were working with the 1st Platoon west of Wiltz, opening a road. The "cat" struck the mine, a

tellermine, exploded it, and threw Johnson for a loop. He was hospitalized for nearly five months and returned to the company after the end of the war. Marshey is still in the hospital and probably back in the states by now. He was wounded by bits of schrapnel. Pfc Anthony Bongiovanni of East Paterson, New Jersey, took over the cat as its operator, and when he got hurt later on, (non-battle casualty), T/5 Charles Blankenberg of Nutley, NJ, replaced him.



But this is getting away from our Battle of the Bulge. When we were first led away from our subject, our Co CP had moved into Esch-sur-le-Sure from where we operated in our missions to the front lines which were now located in the vicinity of the towns of Kaundorf and Buderscheid.

And this is where we came to know, and never to forget! "88 Junction" or "88 Corner", which was the crossroads, shown on the map, at Buderscheid. Whenever a new job came up for us while there at "Esch", the first thing we wanted to find out was whether or not it was anywhere near "88 Junction". "Esch" itself was under fire every night. MP's on duty at bridges were hit. One day, the enemy suddenly sent in a barrage which knocked out two jeeps and their occupants at the approach to the Bailey Bridge shown in a preceding photo. It seems as though they'd try to hit either of the two bridges, the artillery positions on the top of the hills, and our water point. The infantry was sort of stopped up ahead due to the fact that our right flank had been left open, since the 80th Inf Div had not advanced or crossed the river below us as was expected. Therefore, a barrier had to be set up along our right flank, a barrier of road-blocks, minefields, and artillery concentrations. Much engineer work became necessary to accomplish this. As much as we hated to, we had to visit or pass thru the now-famous "88 corner" on our way to and from these assignments. Sgt Alexander Domorski was shot in the shoulder by a sniper as he rode in the front seat of a two-and-a-half thru Kaundorf, way after the advancing troops had gone through. Domorski comes from New York City. Even our cooks back at company had plenty of trouble trying to cook with shells landing all around. Our radio truck was hit one night, and luckily, noone was in it at the time. The truck itself was splattered with holes. The building next to our CP was hit. It was a supply point for an infantry battalion. Most of the shells that came in at night were incendiaries which would set the buildings on fire. On this particular night, C-ration cans popped all over the place. Vehicles burned in front of the building. More artillery concentrations came in, and numerous other buildings were hit.

Out of "Esch" we were sent one day "into the line" in order to relieve the infantry. The weather was so cold that we often pitied those poor dough-boys who spent each and every night in those cold holes on the front, while we were a little more fortunate to be able to return to our billets behind the line. But, we were suddenly turned into infantrymen, and moved out to the front. Pictures and individual's stories could tell this better than I.

At Esch-sur-le-Sure, the Motor Pool section caught hell, and the kitchen found it hard to cook with the shells whistling about.

Our kitchen "staff". Left to right, T/4 Robert V O'Neil of Portland, Oregon, T/4 Bing Mark of Brooklyn, T/5 Herbert Bass of Hoboken, New Jersey, T/5 Daniel Torres of the Bronx, New York, S Sgt Woodrow Wheat of Chicago, Illinois, Pfc Travis Hutchison of La Follette, Tennessee, and Pfc Enslow Deal of Peoria, Illinois.

Above is a snapshot of the 1st Platoon after being relieved from their position in the woods before Wiltz. Left to right, Pfc Leo Ludwikowski of Brooklyn, S Sgt Joe Kiser of Valliant, Oklahoma, and Pfc Rubin Maran of Waterbury, Connecticutt.

I'm pretty sure that I can speak for the 1st Platoon in this deal. Two platoons of the company were changed from "support of the 104th Inf Regt" to "attached to the 104 Inf Regt". This meant that we were to take up a position in the line. Why, we did not discover until we arrived at the Red CP, 2nd Bn, 104th Inf Regt. The CP itself was located in Buderscheid, the hottest little town in Luxembourg, as far as we were concerned. Our orders were to take up a position in the line then being held by Easy Company. We had a white strip of white wash painted down our backs and on our helmets. The Infantry attacked through us that night and they were to distinguish us by the white markings on our clothing. We crept up into our holes. Near midnight that night, the order came. "Attack!" Up and through us went the infantry. All hell broke loose. Mortars came whizzing in. And so did artillery shells. Small-arms fire was intense in the area. There was much yelling, by both the Germans and our infantrymen. Wounded men came running back past us, some without steel helmets. Krauts came walking toward our positions and surrendered. One American was chasing a Heinie across the snow-covered fields, shooting at him, and the Heinie shooting back. Whoever won that little game of "tag" is not known. It was hard to keep contact with the platoons up on the hill. Our company wire and communications crew was along, and the shells kept tearing up the wire. We even lost contact with the rear Bn CP. Our 3rd Platoon was on our right. The attack turned out to be unsuccessful, and the infantry returned to the rear. We resumed our positions until morning when we were relieved. Some of the incidents that happened during the night were comical as hell now that I look back on it. One could never tell who it was coming back from over the hill.

Sgt Wm Lee was herding about 8 prisoners back to the rear, and shells were coming in one right after another. I can still see him crouched there in the ditch on the side of the road, his gun fixed on the Krauts standing on the shelled road with their hands on their heads. Casualties streamed back. One lad, an American, came running past without a rifle. All he kept crying was "medics!" without stopping to see if there was one in the area. It seemed as though all mortar and artillery fire would clear the front line and land in the vicinity of the platoon's CP's which were merely on the side of the road at the base of the battled hill. The platoons would call when shells were landing, unfortunately, and it was practically impossible to talk sense in such a situation. Small-arms fire also helped make the area quite hot. The Krauts were resisting.

The next morning we moved back to the edge of Buderscheid, near "88 corner". We immediately started digging our holes in case we'd have to stay there that night. And we did. The enemy tossed so many shells in, that we were sorry for the fact that we hadn't dug our holes deeper. The digging was tough. It was all slate. The shells came in in groups of five or six, and it seemed as though they arrived side-by-side at "arm's interval". Quite a few of our boys were wounded here, among

them Andy Baker from New York and of the 1st Platoon, Winford Ray of Mitchell, Indiana, also of the 1st Plat, as well as Albert Hillman of the 3rd Platoon and Brooklyn.

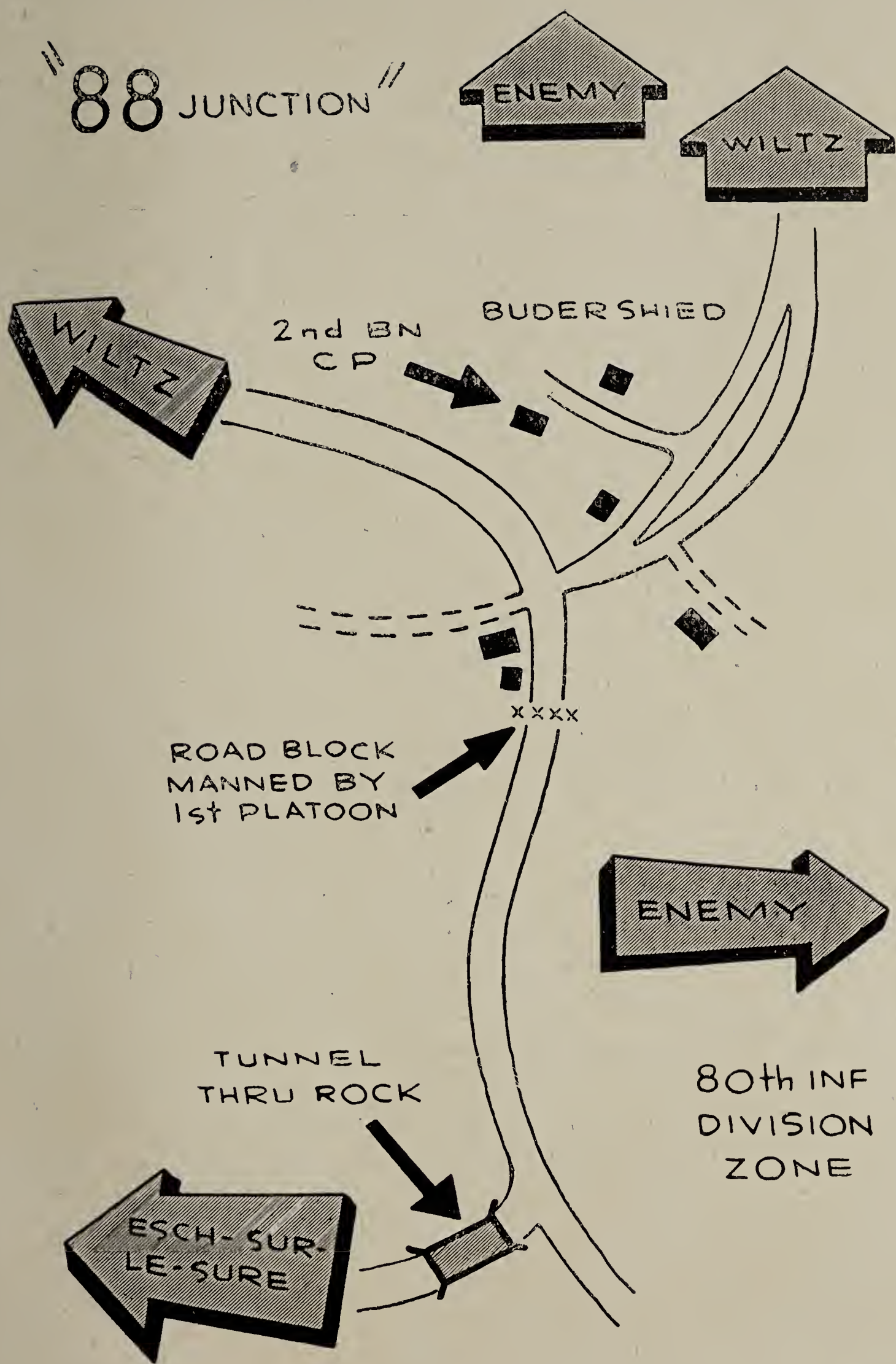
Sgt Nicholas Battaglino of Orange, New Jersey was in the same fox-hole with T/5 Winford Ray of Mitchell, Indiana, when the latter was struck by shrapnel near "88 Junction". Let's listen to "Nick" tell us about it...

"We came off that hill and we were supposed to go back, and the Captain got word that we had to dig in on the side of the hill for the night. This was near Buderscheid. It was cold as hell so we figured that to keep warm, we'd three dig one big hole. The other guy was Red (Pfc David O'Hanlon of New York City.) We started to chop trees and one guy was cutting brush, while the other guy started digging. After we were all done, we needed some rest for we had been up all night, so we hit the hay early. The Krauts were throwing 'em in all around us from midnight on. It was about 3 in the morning when I heard Ray say 'I'm hit'. Red thougt he was dreaming. I says to Red 'Feel him up and see where he's hit'. He felt him up and right on the cheek of his behind was a big gash. It was tough getting into the fox-hole and out, and, besides, we were well wrapped up in blankets and bedrolls. Finally I got out of my bedroll and told Red to take care of him while I got Ray's first-aid packet and water. Being that I couldn't find his 'cause it was so dark, I got my own and told Red to administer first aid to Ray while I went to find the medic. I put my shoes on backwards, I was in such a hurry, and started hollering for the medic. I was falling into guys' holes, stumbling over brush, and slipping on the slick hillside as I yelled 'Medic!'. Finally I found him, and led him to our fox-hole. When he got there, he found out that we had did everything possible and necessary, and he told us to take him down to the Aid Station, which was at '88 Junction'. Matson (Pfc Olsen Matson of Seattle, Washington and Capt Spencer's driver) straddled Ray on his back and carried him to his jeep. The steep grade to the jeep was slippery and it was quite a job to carry Ray, who weighed about 185 or 190 pounds. We layed him on the jeep, and Red and I held him so he wouldn't jar too much. At the first aid station, Ray took everything as though nothing had happened. First thing he said was, 'Boy, I was lucky I didn't get hit in any other place'. Red, Matson, and I stayed there keeping Ray company until daylight, and we then reported back to our position. When we got there in the morning, we saw the damage done to the trees in the area, and how close all those shells of the night before had come, and we said 'Boy, are we lucky to be alive!' What I think of the whole situation is that someone along the line must have screwed up and that we could've come back to our billets in Esch rather than stay out there and lose all the men we did."

Members of the 1st Platoon digging in near Buderscheid's "88 corner". Left to right, Pfc Roy Betts of Iowa, Pfc Charles Smith of South Carolina, Pfc Joe Harris of New Jersey, and T/5 John Repetti of Hoboken.

Sgt Joseph Herman of New York City and the 2nd Platoon was there "in the line" at the time. I asked him to tell me the story:

"We went up to relieve the 3rd Platoon. They had been there about three days and needed relief. They told us it was nice and quiet in those parts and that there was nothing to do but keep out of sight and well concealed. Our job was to stay on the phone and keep communications with the 1st Bn (104th) CP. This was the 2nd Squad's job, and we had the only phone. The other two squads had the job of patrolling the road, which required going ahead to contact the infantry, and go with them on their patrols. The most exciting thing that happened was the 'screaming meemies' landing right by us, and the concussion sent two men to the aid station. (Pfc Vincent Graziano and Cpl Wm Hurley both of Brooklyn, New York.) It also cut the communication lines. The first night we just hung around there, but on the second night, patrolling started. Sgt Daimler (Sgt Wendelin Daimler from New York City and 3rd Squad leader) was the first to go on patrol with the infantry. Just him and two men of the engineers and a couple of infantrymen. Then, Sgt McCool (Sgt Jack Mc Cool of Paris, Texas and 2nd Squad Leader at the time) with Pyrlik (Pvt Martin Pyrlik of DuLuth, Minnesota) went up to a patch of woods to contact the infantry. This patrolling was kept going all night between the three squads (the 1st Squad leader being Sgt Michael Sochinski of New York City). McCool and Pyrlik were fired upon, as were the rest of the men who went forward. Small-arms fire was what they got. We were there three days patrolling and keeping contact with the infantry, before a combat patrol was formed to clear some holding-out Krauts in a patch of woods. Some infantry went along with this combat patrol. These infantrymen were from the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon of the 1st Bn. This is where Dzioba got it. (Pfc John Dzioba of Stanford, Conn) The men in this combat patrol were one lieutenant patrol leader from the infantry, Pfc Anthony Balasco (Rhode Island), Pfc Fred Dittman of Roselle, New Jersey, T/5 Cedric Marshey from Vermont, a couple of men from the infantry, and Dzioba. They approached the patch of woods in a skirmish line, until they were fired upon by burp-guns. That started the 'sham-battle', and the patrol had to retreat on account of the superior number of Krauts. As they retreated Dzioba got hit. Marshey went up to him, and seeing that he was dead, returned with the patrol and came back. The next morning, they formed a company and they called it a 'Jinx Company'. It was all engineers. Our job was to go up there and clear the woods out. We got ready, loaded with ammunition, hand grenades, and other stuff a guy needs with which to win a battle. We waited for orders to move out, and all praying that we wouldn't go out. That was in the morning; then, at about 1000, we received orders that we didn't have to go. (A pincer movement by other units was cutting off this pocket). The line was called off where we were and we left the area returning by trucks to the company in Esch-sur-le-Sure to resume our duties as combat engineers, we hoped . . . . ."


"88 JUNCTION"
ENEMY
WILTZ
WILTZ
2nd BN
CP
BUDERSHIED
ROAD BLOCK
MANNED BY
1st PLATOON
ENEMY
TUNNEL
THRU ROCK
80th INF
DIVISION
ZONE
ESCH-SUR-
LE-SURE

The 1st Platoon was attached to the 104th Inf Regt, and ordered to take up a defensive position at, holy mackerel!, "88 Junction". It seemed as though their prime mission here was to guard "88 Junction" itself, but what it actually was was that our open right flank had to be protected by a platoon of engineers. T/5 Gerald Belcher of Paris, Arkansas, recalls that incident this way:

"We arrived in '88 Junction' about 2200 one night loaded with ammunition, hand grenades, bazookas, rockets, and carrying a 30-calibre water-cooled machine gun. We didn't know exactly what we were going to do or where we were going. The platoon sergeant (S Sgt Joe C Kiser of Valliant, Okla) was taking our squad (Sgt Harry A McMillian of Los Angeles as Squad Leader then) down a winding main road to where the roadblock was. It was the road south of Buderscheid and '88 Junction'. There was a house near the roadblock, where an Anti-Tank squad was staying. They had the two rooms on the first floor and there were two small rooms upstairs which we took. The men who were on guard would replace the men in the rooms after they came off shift. We made a machine-gun nest out of a cord of wood, and covered it with a piece of metal or tin, and that covered the roadblock to a steep hill which was about 100 yards off the road in a southeasterly direction. Setting this position up was done in the darkness. When morning came, we went down to look over the roadblock to see how it was set up. Then we decided it wasn't heavy enough to suit us. So, we cut several more trees to add to the roadblock and also laid some more mines in the road and all across the draw to the hill. We also put up a trip flare. We stood guard for about a week, four men on at a time, three on the machine gun and one on the bazooka for four hours at a time.

"Then, one morning about 0100, Sgt Kiser told us that we had to take out the roadblock and remove the mines, for the 80th Div was coming thru that morning at four o'clock. We went to work in the dark with saws and axes trying to make as little noise as possible, for we did not know how close the Krauts were. Sometimes it sounded as though you could hear them load their guns, they were so close! And early in the night you could hear burpgun bullets coming over the road. One night a mortar shell hit between the house and the machine gun nest, right square into a pile of manure. Manure was splattered all over the place, and not too much schrapnel, but there was a big concussin. It shook the window panes out of the upstairs windows. About 0330 we had the road completely cleared, and even swept it up to about 500 yards past '88 Junction'. About 0630 the 80th Div came through. We remained their at '88 Junction' for a couple of more days before we were relieved and sent back to Esch-sur-le-Sure. To pass time, we'd try to count the shells that came in. There was plenty of them while we were on guard there. We had to thank our mess gergeant for sending up hot chow twice a day, for it was so cold one could hardly survive on K- and C-rations alone."

Other members of this squad were Cpl Wm Rust of Washington, DC, Pvt Willie De Santo of Brooklyn, Pvt Andrew Baker of Brooklyn, Pfc Joe Harris of Vineland, NJ, Pfc Robert Kraus of Seecaucus, NJ, Pvt Charles Abrams of New York City, Pfc Nicholas Caso of West New York, N J, Pfc George Zawacki of Bloomfield, N J (squad truck driver), Pfc Joseph McCallion of Lowell, Mass, and Pfc Raymond R Ruffin of Miami, Florida.

Esch-sur-le-Sure is a place one can never forget, not only because it was a hot little town, but it got to be sort of a "home" to us. We'd always come back to our houses after a tour or job at the front, which was only a few miles away, road miles. The period we spent in "Esch" was a period of engineers-turned-infantry, jobs coming up in the middle of the night, placing a long and wide barrier along our open right flank near "88 Junction", being reverted back to the duties of divisional enginers, having chow in the midst of artillery barrages, sanding roads, clearing snow drifts, receiving late Christmas packages, watching the 6th Armored go through, awaiting the capture of Wiltz, and possibly, relief. After a couple of weeks there in Esch, we left and moved in support of division to another unrecalled town west of Wiltz. The Co CP remained in "Esch" until Wiltz was cleared. Pvt Anthony Cimarosse of Vineland, New Jersey, was washing in a room in the CP building when a shell came screaming over the hill, struck the side of another hill on the other side of the street in Esch and wounded him by its schrapnel. Pfc Herman Stasi of East Orange, NJ, was transferred to H&S Co of our battalion and went into the communications section. Cpl Clyde Raymond and Pvt Bernard Bogart of the 2nd Platoon were seriously wounded in action when a mortar shell struck near their squad truck. Two new officers came into the company there at Esch, one was a 2nd Lt Milton J Bernstein of Colorado, and the other 2nd Lt Robert Borell, who was later to become the aide to Brig Gen Harlan Hartness, assistant divisional commander. Dzioba of the 2nd Platoon was listed in the morning reports as "missing in action". Pvt Russell H Holmes was slightly wounded in action. So much happened at one time and we were kept so busy that it is not too easy to recall all the little incidents which happened while we were at Esch-sur-le-Sure. About all that I can do is leave this one and only impression in the reader's mind: The men of this company will never forget the action that took place in the vicinity of Esch-sur-le-Sure during the coldest part of winter.

We moved into Wiltz on the 23rd of the month. (January). The fight for Wiltz was a tough one, since all these afore-mentioned incidents took place in "the battle for Wiltz". The city itself was a mess. But what sticks to my mind better than anything else about entering Wiltz was the ride in. We passed batches of woods which had been literally "pruned" by our constant artillery fire. Knocked-out German vehicles were strewn along the roads, most of them covered with snow which was still falling. Dead horses, and cows were noticeable, too. There was a wrecked automobile with a sign "Booby-Trapped" on it. There was a

Our air compressor operated and driven by T/5 Adolph Maliniak of Brooklyn, on the road into Wiltz. Snow made mines and booby-traps twice as hard to detect . . .

detour in the road, past mine fields which the Krauts had time to lay at apparent great costs of dead and wounded. We even saw quite a number of our own American vehicles which had been knocked out by mines. In the city itself, enemy artillery was still coming in, but its amount and time interval between barrages indicated to us that the enemy was on the run. Sgt Vincent E Bunce of the 3rd Platoon was slightly wounded in action near Wiltz. He remained on duty. All roads out of Wiltz had to be checked for mines and roadblocks and opened to military traffic. This required each and every squad's cooperation. Pfc Frank Ciccone of the 3rd Platoon, a truck driver, stepped on a Schu-Mine and was seriously wounded. We had a pretty nice set-up at Wiltz. Some of the men in the company drove the battalion snow-plow. Many of the roads were still impassable due to high snow drifts.

Clearing the roads into Wiltz was a terrific job. Sgt Anthony Buttino of New York City (Brooklyn) tells it this way . . . .

"I got my orders from Lt Gannon in a town about 10 miles from Wiltz. He showed me the road on the map which had to be cleared. It was the main road into Wiltz from Bastogne, the main supply road for the Germans in the Bulge. A Company was working north from Wiltz and we were were working south toward Wiltz. Leopard (Pfc Walter Leopard of Spartanburg, S.C.) was sweeping down the road and when he hit a mine he called me over. I came over and cleared the snow away from

around the mine. I looked at the damn thing in amazement because I never saw anything like it in all my life! We had a little discussion as to what type of mine it might have been. The reason for us not knowing the type was because they had a little illuminous dial on top of the mine with a wire running from it into the snow. There was 60 of them in that mine-field. It was getting dark and after seeing the wires laying around the mine-field, we figured that quite a few mines were booby-trapped. We loaded up and went back to Wiltz and reported to Capt Spencer, and he told us that the road had to be cleared 'night or day'. Well, we went back. We staked all the mines. Then we threaded them with rope, about 8 at a time. We brought our truck up within 75 feet of the closest mine, and pulled them out, 8 at a time. It took us quite some time to get the whole thing cleared. About 0230, we made contact with A Co. A Company was working on a booby-trapped abatis. We had half of the mine-field taken out when we heard a loud explosion. We all got pretty 'chumpy' and we found that one man from A Company had got hurt by a booby-trap which was under a tree. A Company men evacuated the wounded man and we continued clearing the mines from the

Our "cat" takes a break somewhere on the road near Wiltz, Luxembourg . . .

road. The last mine to be picked up was the one with the phoney dial (illuminous dial). We got so darn disgusted because it was cold and dark and we couldn't see what we were doing, that Andrews and Marcone (Pfc Seymour Andrews of Orange, NJ and Pfc Sam Marcone of Woodbury, NJ, truck driver for the 3rd Platoon) went over and picked the mine up, and, to their amazement, nothing went off. Capt Redheffer was down there with A Company and we told him that all the mines were cleared, and he told us it was okay to get back to company. That was the spot where we picked up the most mines, and it had to be done in darkness and the mines were really seated in the icy snow."

Rumors had it that we were being relieved in this sector, and that we were moving south to the sector farthest south on the Third Army front. This wasn't far from wrong. We left Wiltz on the 27th of the month, and arrived in Saarlautern, Germany, on the 27th-28th. Our trip down to Saarlautern was long and cold. We passed thru Luxembourg City, into France, past the German border beyond Bouzonville into Saarlautern. The sign which stated that we were entering Germany looked like this:

The snow in this sector seemed to be much deeper. We were apparently coming into a different situation, and how! We came to Saarlautern to relieve the 95th Inf Div. Our troops moved in as the 95th's moved out. Infantry replaced infantry. Artillery replaced artillery. Engineers replaced engineers. It seemed funny at first that we could walk around the streets so freely. This was supposed to be a hot town. We looked over the buildings. Wow, how the joints had been looted! And it was here that we came to be introduced to the right techniques of "how to loot the best". As the end of the month came to a close, we were still in the process of getting accustomed to our new situation. Saarlautern was the place this time. Street fighting in Saarlautern, and any fighting anywhere around Saarlautern, we shall never forget either. The situation was puzzling to the misinformed, and worse to those not informed at all!

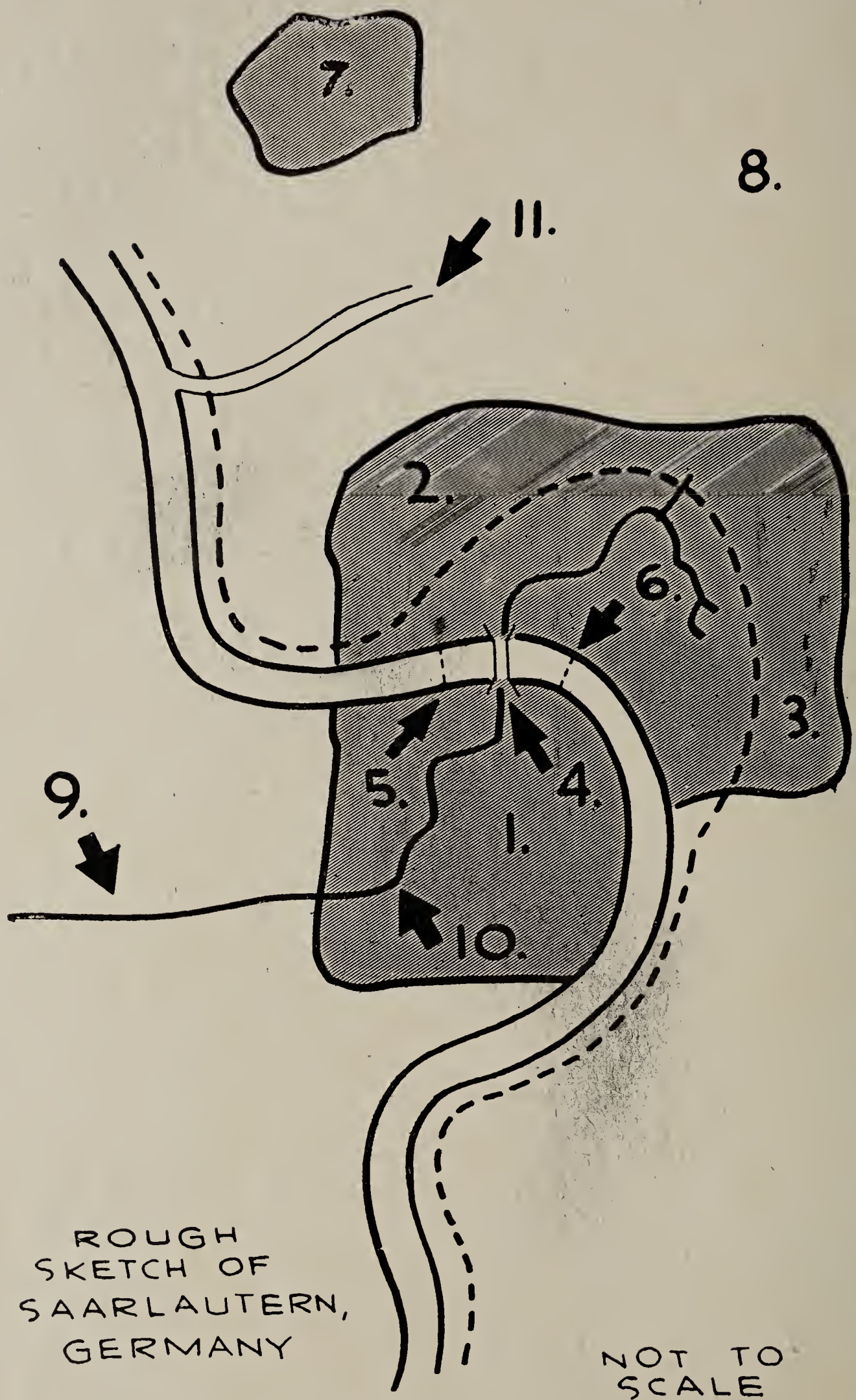
PART II

FIGHTING IN THE DEUTSCHLAND

February 1945

I came into Saarlautern the day after the company arrived. I was with Lt Malone and "Jake" (T/5 Thomas Pringle of Orange, New Jersey) in the jeep, and Lt Malone had been assigned the job of guiding our "cat" into Saarlautern, all the way from Wiltz. This took more patience than the men could endure, those of us who came along late. We had to travel through the larger cities on the way south. "South" sounds so warm and high-temperatured, but actually, it was one of the coldest rides I've ever been on. It came to the point where I took out my "bag, sleeping, wool" and sneaked into it to keep warm. The 6-ton towing the "cat" and flat-bed had no chains. Every time we came to a hill which was a little too steep for the "cat" and 6-ton to make, we'd have to get out, unload the "cat", have the cat tow the flatbed up the hill, hook it up to the 6-ton which would have made it without the extra attachment, load up the "cat" again, and take off. This happened time and again. It took us about 4 or 5 hours to get out of Wiltz itself before even starting! We passed through Arlon, Belgium, in the middle of the night, and caught a little "shuteye" on the highway between Arlon and Luxembourg City. We arrived around noon the next day in Saarlautern. The company had its experiences to talk about, too. They had bedded down near the town of Bedersdorf, just a few miles from Saarlautern. The snow was really deep in some places, and we left a guide in Bouzonville to hold up the "cat" there. The "cat" and its crew stayed in Bouzonville until the company settled down in Saarlautern; then, it was brought into the city.

When we arrived in the city, we found the remaining elements of the 95th Inf Div moving out. We managed to sneak a little "inside dope" about the situation in this area. They told us about how the large concrete bridge over the Saar had been taken intact. It sounded like a Hollywood tale, what with the Heinies running to pull the detonating gadget which would set off the charges on the bridge, this blowing it to kingdom come, and men of the 95th Inf knocking them off with their perfect and timely sharp-shooting. One Kraut got to the detonator, put his hand on the gadget, when a bullet struck him just in the nick of time. Anyway, the bridge was ours and the 95th had established and



ROUGH SKETCH OF SAARLAUTERN, GERMANY

NOT TO SCALE

Legend to Sketch of Saarlautern, Germany

Large shaded area = Urban limits of Saarlautern

1 = Saar-louis

2 = Saar-louis Rodern

3 = Fraulautern

4 = Concrete-arched bridge taken intact by the 95th Inf Div

5 = Location of 2nd Platoon's suspension bridge

6 = Location of 1st Platoon's suspension bridge

7 = The town of Dillingen, north of Saarlautern

8 = Area on this side is Siegfried Line, covered with many and various types of entrenchments, pillboxes, obstacles, etc . . .

9 = The road we came in on from Bouzonville, France

10 = Approximate location of our CP in the Saar-Louis section of the city of Saarlautern.

11 = A tributary of the Saar.

The dark broken line gives a reader a better idea of what our bridgehead here looked like. This line represents "the line".

held a bridgehead. A glimpse at the sketch of Saarlautern will clarify the rough idea of this bridgehead. As one must understand, bridgeheads are hot-spots. The enemy didn't appreciate the fact that we had already crossed the Saar. They'd try all they could to knock us back where we came from. On the enemy side of the river lay the largest sector of the Siegfried Line, the thickest anywhere along its long range. Restricted maps showed us a few of the implacements and pillboxes on the other side, and, believe me, there were plenty! The toughest part about it was that they were manned, too. Once over the concrete bridge and over onto the bridgehead, a man was under enemy observation and fire. The bridge itself was a honey of a target for the Krauts who kept shooting 88's at it. If I remember correctly, the guy that was shooting that 88 was damn good. Jokingly, one of our men said he'd like to go up and pin

Saarlautern is located between Saarbrucken and Merzig on this map from "Yank", the Army weekly. Note the thickness of the Siegfried Line in front of the city.

a Marksmanship Medal on him for trying to hit the bridge. But, the bridge held, and traffic moved over it, what little traffic dared to, because any vehicle on the other side was liable to get it with either smallarms or artillery. One infantry jeep driver was riding along, when a Kraut opened up, the machine-gun bullets hitting right in between the driver's posterior and the gasoline tank of the jeep!

It wasn't any too safe over on the other side of the river. Every so often, the Krauts would let loose with a burst of burp-gun or machine-gun fire down the streets, merely harrassing fire, but dangerous, and nothing to ignore not in the least! Flares were also prominent in the vicinity. It was especially SOP to freeze when a flare went up on the other side of the river. However, it was pretty hard to freeze when riding along at about 40 or 50 miles per hour, and, brother, ya had to drive that fast, or ya'd be kissing St Peter at the Golden Gate in no time at all!

At about this time, we were introduced to "Paul's Moon". "Paul" referred to our Commanding General, and the "moon" was a huge A A Searchlight which was reflected into the town of Saarlautern from way back over the hill, west of Saarlautern. The "moon", as it became to be known, gave considerable illumination to the streets and helped considerably with blackout driving.

The city of Saarlautern was typical of so many masses of ruin as seen in the daily newspapers. It was a mess, and well "gone-through". You know what I mean by that. The best remaining undemolished homes were used by the troops as billets. Cellars were wonderful, and one acquired that feeling of being so safe and away from danger.

Our company was all located at a corner of a parkway and street, in Saar-Louis.

Each platoon had its respective building, and each tried to live a little more comfortable than the other. "Just like home" — with hell's fires burning just a few hundred yards away. The company had a radio and we used to rotate it from platoon to platoon every 24 hours. Vehicles were dispersed around the streets. Telephones from the CP to each platoon were rigged up, as well as electricity from the company generator, a useful "souvenir". Mattresses, those nice, fluffy, inner-spring mattresses, were brought in along with the rest of the souvenirs. These came in very handy. The best in comfort for the fighting men was acquired through the transfer of soft easy chairs, luxurious furniture, rugs and carpets, elaborate stoves, and pictures. But, don't get me wrong. Life wasn't in the least all peaches and cream, mind you. There were Krauts around. The enemy. Possible sudden death. Danger. 88's. Mortars. Shrapnel. Saarlautern was indeed no joke. Out of its rubble and ruin come various stories by the men themselves. One squad of the 3rd Platoon was taken down to the concrete bridge, which was well prepared with tons of demolition to be blown in case of an unexpected counterattack. The squad of engineers was to check the demolitions each day, and remain on the alert to be called for blasting. This squad

was the 2nd Squad under Sgt Vincent E Bunce of the 3rd Platoon. The 1st Platoon and the 2nd Platoon each constructed their suspension bridges across the Saar within the bridgehead limits. Suspension bridges had to be resorted to because the current of the river was so strong that no floating bridge would remain intact. Pictures can tell this better than I. The bridges were all built under enemy observation and small-arms fire, not to leave out artillery fire. Trucks and personnel could roam the streets unobserved, since the buildings afforded perfect concealment.

Well, this was the situation when the 26th Div took over Saarlautern: one regiment was responsible for operations in the bridgehead, while the other two were dispersed along the river for a few miles north and south of the city. The first regiment in Saarlautern was the 104th Inf, with their attached units, including us, the engineers, for whom there was plenty to do. Infantry patrols in Saar-Louis Rodern and Fraulautern included engineers. Large obstacles, along a line of defense in the rear had to be checked and rechecked. There were prepared craters, charges on bridges, mine-fields, roadblocks, and booby traps. It is well to note here that the Saar River ran along the foot of a valley, naturally, and was surrounded by hills on either side. Saarlautern was well split half on either side of the river. Leaving the last hill before the river, one was under enemy observation until he hit the city itself. Some of the above-mentioned obstacles were under enemy observation, and when we first started checking these particular ones, we'd wear snow-capes as camouflage.

So much for an introduction to what was up for us in the city of Saarlautern. Let's listen to some of the stories the men have to tell....

Pfc Norbert Loos, of Bloomfield, New Jersey, and of the 3rd Platoon, experienced some of the street fighting in Saarlautern. Tell us about it, "Bert"....

"We were kinda lost that day because some of the men hadn't come back the day before from patrolling with the infantry. So, it was my turn to go out the next day, and I went out with Moran (Sgt Michael Moran of Bloomfield, NJ) and Mathews (T/5 Charles Mathews of Brooklyn, NY) and Phil (T/5 Phillip Yanulites of Connecticutt, and medical aid man with the company). One part of the patrol had to go up on one side of the street. They were Setela (Pfc John Setela of Brooklyn), Pro (Pfc Sam Provo of North Agawam, Mass), Kelly (Cpl Edward Kelciewski of Brooklyn). They managed to get up on their side of the street in Fraulautern. We got out and got situated in a cobbler shop, I believe, and the damn infantry fellow had the radio on his back, but he had the thing turned off, the aerial down, because we didn't know how to use it. We were then out of contact with the rest of the men. We hemmed and hawed around there for a long time. It was cold and miserable and raining. The sniper bullets couldn't get into the place where we were, but they could glaze off at an angle. Finally, the sergeant that was in charge of the other patrol, came down the

road, and came over to where we were and gave us hell for not keeping up with him. So, our destination was to go to the corner house, No 69, I guess, and we did manage to get to 65 through a latrine in the back. The infantrymen went on up to 69, which was our corner house, and they had to cross an open road which was in plain view of the enemy. But, our sergeant decided that we engineers should stay at No 65. While we were huddled in the kitchen something came flying through the window and landed in the next room and exploded. All I saw was a big red flash, and a gust of wind running through my pants. It blew up. I don't know what it was. Mathews said to Phil that it was a booby-trap that Mathews had set off, but Phil thought it must have been a hand grenade or a mortar. Then, the infantry men came back after their house (No 69) had blown up from underneath them. A direct hit. Noone was hurt, and we returned to the cobbler's shop; then through a hole in the cobbler's shop, we managed to get back to the CP and by that time it was time for us to go back to our residence in Saarlautern (Saar-Louis). The whole situation was simply all messed up. I thought that street fighting was quite exciting. It was something new. In Alsace-Lorraine, we just ran around with the infantry, and in the Bulge it was another type of fighting, but in Saarlautern, street fighting was new and interesting to me."

The 2nd Platoon was to reconnoiter a site for a footbridge. One of the men on this reconnaissance, and who has been awarded the Silver Star Medal for it, was Pfc Ralph Paulillo of Hoboken, New Jersey:

"From Platoon CP, we went to Company CP, to Battalion CP (Infantry), to Company CP (Infantry) which was Fox Company. They told us what they wanted, that they wanted to put in a foot-bridge to get supplies across on foot. So, we went to pick a site. As we were looking around, we found one bridge. Then we figured there were more bridges around there, so we went down about 500 yards and found another bridge. We did this all under artillery, mortar, and machine-gun fire, crawling most of the way. We went back to the infantry Fox Company CP, gave them all the information they wanted, and went back to Bn to pick up Joe Carrero (jeep driver for the 2nd Platoon). From there we came back to our own company and gave the Co Comdr and Lt Wilson (the Platoon Ldr) all the information. Then we went to get some 'schlaffen'. I think I was a lucky guy to come out of it all right."

The other two men on this patrol were Sgt Wendelin Daimler and Pfc John Stanton, both of the 2nd Platoon and New York City.

Pfc Ralph Paulillo of Hoboken who told about the reconnaissance patrol that found the two foot-bridges in Saarlautern. The three men hold the Silver Star Medals.

Pfc John Stanton of New York City and the 2nd Platoon, member of reconnaissance patrol in Saarlautern, which reconnoitered footbridge site and discovered two intact footbridges! Awarded Silver Star Medal for this reconnaissance.

A so-called "good" souvenir, and a handy one, too, our generator with Sgt William Moeser and T/5 Philip LaPlaca of the Motor Pool section . . .

Floating bridges would not remain intact on the Saar River, mostly due to the speed of the current. Above, a shot of "corps engineers" putting in a pile-driven bridge, and showing some of the rubble of floating bridges which had been washed away somewhere upstream . . .

Above, the 1st Platoon's suspension bridge across the Saar River in Saarlautern, called "Sgt Kiser's Golden Gate Bridge", and built under the supervision of S Sgt Joe C Kiser of Valliant, Oklahoma. Below, two snapshots of the 2nd Platoon's suspension bridge in the same vicinity. This one was constructed under the supervision of Sgt Wendelin Daimler of New York City.

Following is an article, as printed in the "Daily Oklahoman", and taken from the story on the construction of the 1st Platoon suspension bridge across the Saar River in Saarlautern. The story first appeared in "The Grapevine", the 26th Inf Div's weekly publication:

"SGT KISER'S BRIDGE 2ND GOLDEN GATE

They've got a big bridge at San Francisco, but the 101st Combat Engineers don't think it's got a thing on Sgt Joe C Kiser's 'Golden Gate Bridge' a 4-day construction job across a swollen French river.

Kiser, a Valliant, Okla., engineerman admits he got a few ideas, including the name from the bridge in California. The bridge the engineers built is also a suspension type, and holds some kind of a record, too.

'I think it's the longest suspension bridge of its type on the Western Front,' Kiser claims. Total length of the foot-bridge is 208 feet.

Built by the 1st Platoon of Company B under artillery, machine-gun, and rifle fire, the toughest part of the job was getting a guy-line across the river. They used rifle grenades with tracing tape, and then attempted three river crossings in an assault boat. Pvt Arthur Dolley of Beverly, Mass, overturned in the fast water on the first trip but finally the assault boat crossed the river safely.

Actual construction work was under the direction of Kiser, Sgt Harry A McMillian of Los Angeles, and Cpl William McCormick of National Park, New Jersey.

After four days of work, the bridge was completed. The last detail was finished when Kiser's men painted a sign and hung it on a plank at the approach to the bridge. The sign reads: "Sgt Kiser's Golden Gate Bridge".

Kiser looked at it with satisfaction.

'I thought we could do it', he said, 'Guess I was right'".

— courtesy of the Daily Oklahoman,
published at Oklahoma City, Okla.

Members of the 1st Platoon moving away from a demolition charge which blasted the weak wall on the left side of the street in Saarlautern . . .

One squad of the 3rd Platoon was detailed to remain on the alert to blast the concrete bridge in case of a counter-attack. Some of the members of this squad are shown above outside their dugout next to the bridge. This section was always under artillery fire, as well as harrassing small-arms fire. Left to right, Cpl Stephen Sojkowski of Springfield, Mass, assistant squad leader, Pvt Robert Mowery of Philadelphia, Sgt Vincent E Bunce of Greenwich Village, NY, and Pfc Charles Pringle of Newport, South Carolina.

I looked at the 2nd Platoon's "diary" and discovered that they were pretty well concerned with a mill while at Saarlautern. It seems as though it was being used as an observation post by the infantry. One wall appeared to be unsafe to troops operating in the area, and the 2nd Platoon was given the mission of going out there to destroy the wall. On the 2nd of February, around supper time, 2 men of the 2nd Platoon, Cpl Joseph Herman and T/5 Rosario Minimi, with T/5 Joe Carrero of New Jersey, jeep driver, left the company area and took off for the bridgehead to do the job. It was getting way on after dark when they were returning, and "Joie" (Carrero) was stepping it up on the way back, trying to dodge the machine-gun bullets and other small-arms fire in the vicinity. The jeep ran smack head-on into another jeep, rendering it beyond repair. "Joie" was badly hurt and evacuated. Herman and Minimi, were shaken up from the accident. "Joie" suffered a fractured knee-cap. I remember once when I went over to the 2nd Platoon to get the story on a patrol that the men had been on. They wanted me to emphasize "Joie's" good driving. Joie kept his head about him, and he always managed to bring his vehicle out of those hottest of spots.

T/5 Rosario Minimi of Lodi, New Jersey, and the 2nd Platoon . . .

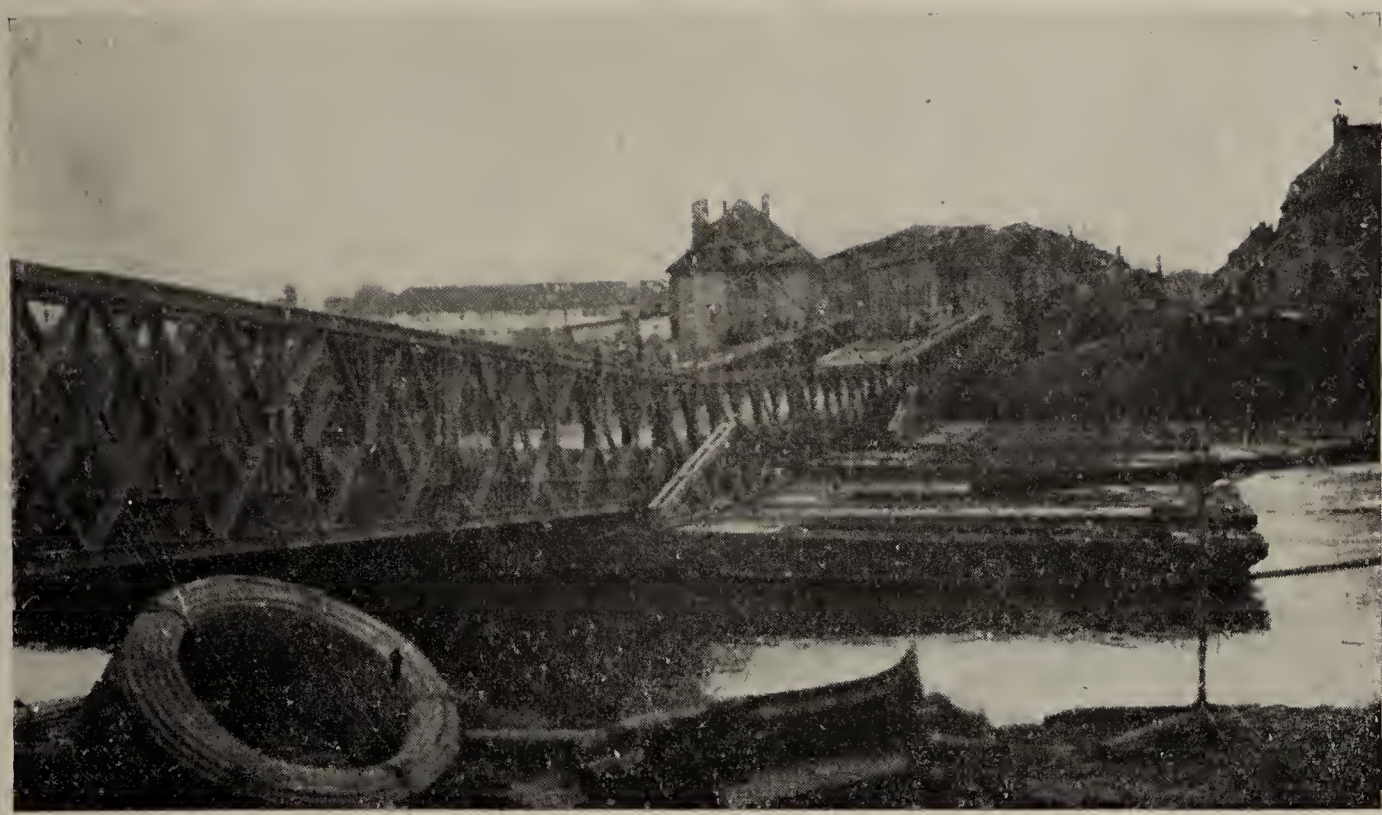
T/5 Rosario Minimi of Lodi, New Jersey was one of the men of the 2nd Platoon to be sent out to do that mill job. Here is his story:

"Well, the job come for one 'demo' man and two volunteers from the squad, so Pfc Leo Lanzarone (of Brooklyn) and Cpl Joseph Herman was the 'demo'-man-in-charge. So we took off for Blue CP (3rd Bn, 104th Inf) in T/5 Carrero's jeep. (T/5 Joseph Carrero is from West New York, New Jersey) From Blue CP we got a guide to take us up to L Co, and we went to L Co. From L Co, we picked up a lieutenant to guide us up to the mill. We had to cross a stream by stepping on rocks. We had about 30 pounds of 'demo' a piece on us. It was pretty tough crossing the stream what with all the debris in it. This was done under enemy observation and we had to be quick about it. The lieutenant knew the house to take us to by following the tracks in the snow. But, the snow had melted and he did not recognize the right house! We walked by the house many times until the guards stopped us. Then we finally got our orders from that outpost as to what was to be done on the mill. So we picked up another guide from that outpost to take us up to the mill. It was the farthest point in our lines. What had to be done was to blow the wall because plenty of enemy artillery was hitting around the house and the infantrymen were afraid that it was going to collapse on them. So, Cpl Herman made a recon on the wall and building, and he thought it was strong enough to hold up against all the artillery. The Infantry wasn't satisfied with his report; so they wanted a lieutenant from the engineers to make the recon on the wall. We came back, and didn't blow the wall that time, and Lt Wilson and Cpl Herman had to come back and make another recon. This time they decided to blow the wall, so the next night, Cpl Herman, and myself, and T/5 Carrero took off with the peep to blow the wall. We left Carrero at Blue CP and took off for the mill. We finally got to the mill. There was plenty of action going on. We told the infantrymen that we were going to blow the wall, so they took off and left us alone. We started setting up the charges, and while we were working, an announcement was made over a PA system out in the field. At first, Herman and I were scared than hell. Then we found out that that announcement in German was from the Americans to the Germans, asking the Krauts to come down and surrender and that they wouldn't be fired upon by our infantry. We finally set the charges all up, and had them ready to blow, pulled the fuse lighter, but the fuse lighter came off the primer cord. Only the fuse went off that time. We put another fuse and cap on, and we pulled the fuse out of the cap this time! This time he put two caps and two fuses on the charge to make sure it did work. All during this time, we were alone in this one building, so I had my rifle ready to fire at anything that moved. We got set, and this time the 'demo' went off. After the 'demo' went off, a phosphorus shell that was in the building started burning! We did our best to put it out, but we couldn't and the building started to burn. We were afraid that plenty of artillery would come in now so we went back to Blue CP. On our way back, we

had to cross a foot-bridge which was under enemy machine-gun fire. As soon as we crossed the bridge a flare went up. I expected holy hell to break loose. Rather than take a chance at getting shot up, we ran like scared rabbits. We finally reached Blue CP and picked up Carrero. Carrero had been waiting for us for about three hours and he had his eyes accustomed to the bright lights. When we got out in the pitch dark, he couldn't see so very good. We took off for our building.

"We had to cross this one bridge that was under enemy artillery fire in a hurry. So while we were crossing this bridge two flares went up, and they must have blinded Carrero for a second or two. A couple of seconds later we had a head-on collision with another peep. Herman was knocked out of the peep. I was pushed against Carrero and up to the windshield. And Carrero got crushed between the wheel and the dashboard. The two peeps began to smoke up and I thought they'd burst into flames, but they didn't. When I came to my senses I was out of the peep and Carrero was still in it. So, thinking that the peep would burst into flames, I ran over to take Carrero out. About that time, he started to come out himself. As he came out, he fell to the ground because of his injury on his leg. I picked him up and pulled him over to the side, and found out that his face was bleeding. I took out my first-aid pouch and put a bandage over where he was bleeding. All this time flares were still going up and I expected artillery to start coming in. Herman ran back to Blue CP to get a peep or a medic, and one of the fellows in the other peep went to the 104th medics to get a medics' peep from them. I wanted to take Carrero out and carry him away, but he didn't want to be moved because his leg was in great pain. Finally, the medic peep came and it wasn't long until Herman came with another peep. We put Carrero on the medic peep and took Carrero back to the infantry battalion medics. There they found out that he had a broken knee-cap. Herman was suffering from bruised muscles and cuts over his legs. All I had was bruised muscles and a little bit of shock. We called up Lt Wilson and he came to pick us up in another peep . . . It was an exciting adventure, but I wouldn't want to go through it again. I think that was the hottest place in the ETO!"

Sgt Joseph Herman of New York, New York, and the 2nd Platoon. Herman holds the Silver Star Medal.

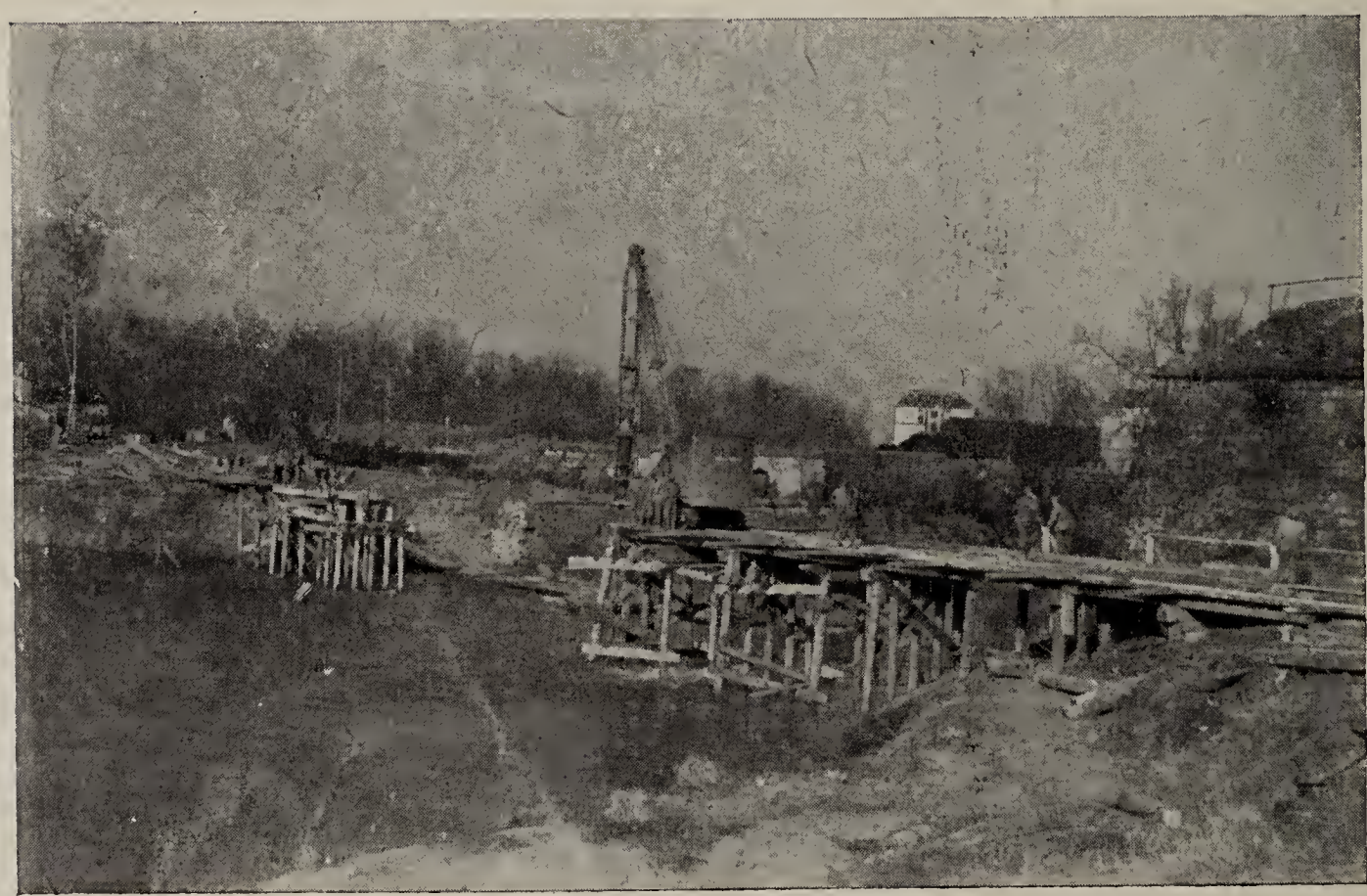


"Corps Engineers" of the 206th Engr Combat Bn constructed a floating Bailey Bridge about 100 yards downstream from the 1st Platoon's suspension on the Saar River at Saarlautern. The idea of constructing these auxiliary bridges, the Krauts did not like, and they did all they could to make it hot for us. Above, the completed floating Bailey Bridge. Below, Sgt William Lee of the 1st Platoon which was given the job of preparing the bridge with demolitions. Sgt Lee is wrapping primer cord around a block of "Composition C" demolition. (snapshots by T/5 Richard Heinrich.)

The company CP was located in a corner building, and it included the kitchen, Motor Pool section, Supply Room, CP, quarters for the personnel of Headquarters Platoon, and Orderly Room. When we first arrived in Saarlautern and the company took over this building, the CP and kitchen were located in the cellar. The snow had started to thaw and water had somehow or other began to rise in the cellar, so much so that the kitchen and CP group had to move into the upstairs of the building. Col Free (Lt Col Richard Free, Bn CO) came to visit us one day. Someone back at battalion had apparently told him that our CP was in the cellar of said building. He started down the dark stairway into the cellar, and walked straight into the water almost up to his knees. Col Free found the CP on the first floor, just one more flight up the stairs. Not only the EM are misinformed in battle, so it seems! !

Pfc (later Squad Leader of the 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon) James Brown of Spartanburg, South Carolina remembers this particular action in Saarlautern:

"We were working for the 2nd Bn for about three days. On this particular day, there were three of us, Bert (Pfc Norbert Loos of Bloomfield, NJ) Roberts (Pfc James Roberts of Arkansas) and myself. We had to report to Colonel Heath (CO of the 2nd Bn from Hagerstown, Maryland) and pick up a couple of guys from the A&P Platoon. We went up to a chimney in a pot and pan factory. We started putting up our charges. We were using about 250 pounds on these chimneys and it took quite a while to bring it up to the site. While we were charging one of those



A pile-driven fixed bridge put in by "corps engineers" at Saarlautern after floating bridges were found to be unsuitable. This one is near the 2nd Platoon's suspension bridge . . .

chimneys, a pane of glass fell out of the door. We didn't know what the hell that was. Then another fell out, and we started getting a little suspicious by that time. When a third one fell out and a bullet struck the chimney just above our heads was when we found out that someone was shooting at us. We skimmeyed around to the other side of the chimney. They kept on shooting, so we went back to the OP and asked them what the heck was going on and they told us that some guy was probably trying out his rifle. So, we came back to the chimney. We finished fixing it up and went back to wait until six o'clock because the Colonel would be watching at six for the chimney to disappear. We blew it at 6, right on the head. Then, we just went on back to the CP to wait for another. We went back to get some sleep before going out in the morning . . . ."

The most exciting story to come out of our Saarlautern operations was the one in which a patrol was trapped under the enemy's noses for approximately five days and nights. Pvt Hubert A Webb of Lautern, Oklahoma, and the 3rd Platoon was one of the engineers on this patrol The other two were Cpl Stephen Sojkowski of Holyoke, Mass, and Sgt Vincent E Bunce of Greenwich Village, NY. This is how Webb recalls this experience:

"The purpose of the patrol was to capture an enemy prisoner, and it was about 23 infantrymen and 8 engineers. There were two assault boats with 12 infantrymen and 4 engineers in each. The engineers in the other boat were "Obie" (T/5 Harold O'Brien of New York City) Satchell (Pfc Hillard Satchell from Oklahoma) Labrade (Cpl Wallace Labrade of New York City) and Rankin (Pfc Floyd Rankin of Arkansas). The engineers in the boat I was in were Bunce, Steve, myself, and Sanders (Pfc Zeno Sanders of Oklahoma). When we started out on the patrol it was dark and raining. There was an infantry officer who oriented us on the patrol until about midnight. Then we carried the assault boats down to the river. We carried the boats up the river about knee-deep in mud for about 100 yards. We boarded the assault boats and had quite a bit of difficulty in crossing the river. After we had landed on the enemy shore, we reorganized and three other engineers and myself stayed with the boats. About 50 yards off the shore, there was enemy pillboxes. The closest pillbox was setting on the railroad tracks. There was a boy in the infantry who could talk German. He was going to try and talk with the Germans and try to get them to surrender. The patrol started along the edge of the tracks. They got nearly to the pillbox when they hit concertinas. (Wire entanglement obstacles.) The sergeant in the infantry asked Bunce if he would cut the wire. Bunce told him that he would cut the wire, but the infantry had better be prepared to fight when he did, for the wire was bound to be booby-trapped. By this time it was getting pretty late in the morning, so the infantry sergeant decided not to attack the pillbox. They called the patrol together and started back down to the river. After they had gone a few feet, the men started stepping on mines. The men came rushing down to the boats, and Sgt Bunce was trying to get check on the men. We had heard three mines go off, so we knew

BLOWN
RAILROAD
BRIDGE
ENEMY
OCCUPIED
PILLBOX
DILLIGEN
SAAR
RIVER
ENEMY
SAARLAUTERN
NOT TO
SCALE

that there must have been at least three wounded men. They came carrying two wounded men down the hill. Sgt Bunce asked where the other wounded man was. Someone in the patrol said the other wounded man was walking. So again, we boarded the boats with the two wounded men in our boat. Sojkowski and myself was in the front of the boat, trying to keep the boat straight or steering it across. We got over half way across when our boat was swept against the blown-out railroad bridge. We didn't know what happened to the other boat; it was so dark we couldn't see it. We got out on the steel girders of the blown bridge, and tried to get across, but couldn't make it. Everybody was in a confusion. At this time, the Germans started throwing up flares, So the infantry sergeant decided to get the boat back to enemy shore, and try crossing again. We all got in the boat, and started pushing it along the edge of the debris that had piled up along the abutment of the blown bridge. All of a sudden, we hit this whirlpool and the boat started to go around and around.

"The boat hit a log, and both sides caved in. Everyone was scrambling to get on the logs. When I noticed that one of the wounded men was near me, I grabbed the one near me and Bunce grabbed the other. I managed to push him up on the log, but when I did, the boat went down and I went down with it. As I was going down, I managed to catch the butt of a rifle, pulling myself up on the log. I then dragged the wounded man onto the log. We stayed the rest of that night and the next day out on the debris in the stream. It was raining and very cold. Some of the infantry boys had tried to swim the stream that night, but we haven't seen them since. The next evening, the water got so high that we had to go to the abutment of the bridge. The next morning, within a space of ten feet, we picked up 15 Schu-mines, in the little space we had slept in that night! We started digging out a hole with our bayonets and sticks. By this time, we were nearly froze and getting hungry. Sojkowski noticed a raincoat and overcoat that had been blown to shreds. He made his way down, searched through the pockets, and found a K-ration, which was a Breakfast. Bunce started dividing it up between the men, of which there were 10. The next morning, one of the infantrymen sort of lost his head, crawled out on the girders of the blown-out bridge, pushed a pontoon float that had lodged against the debris into the river, and started floating downstream on it. He reached about a hundred yards downstream and we watched the Jerries machine-gun him from the pillbox. Later in the morning, our troops threw in a smoke-screen, downstream from us.Then, some of our troops came down to the opposite abutment from us. They tried to shoot a rope tied to a rifle grenade across to the steel girder in the middle of the stream. The Germans saw them, and started shooting machine-gun fire and mortar-fire at them. The rifle grenade had only gone about half-way to the girder, so they went back. The Germans shot bursts of machine-gun fire all during the day that day. I don't think they knew we were there, but I figured that they thought our troops were trying to make a river-crossing. During the evening, the

Germans fired with artillery upon the high ground on friendly side. One of the infantrymen said the fire was landing right in an OP they had on the hill. A liaison plane also came over that day. We waved to him with our handkerchiefs. The next morning, our troops threw in another smoke screen, where we were. We never saw any signs of any of our troops, but the Jerries fired machine-gun fire and mortar fire all into the smoke screen. After the smoke screen had cleared, the liaison plane came over again. We waved to him with our handkerchiefs again. The sun came out that morning, and I found a compact in my pocket that I had got at Saar-Union. We started using the reflection of the sun against the mirror in the compact to try and signal our troops. We pulled off our shoes and socks and left them off most of the day to dry. We also rubbed our feet and legs to try to get the circulation back in them. By this time, the river had gone down quite a bit! The infantry boy that was wounded which was laying closest to us started complaining with his foot, so we took the first-aid bandage, that we had on it, off. We gave him more wound pills, put some more wound powder on his foot, put a new bandage on it, and wrapped it up in the remains of the overcoat. We hadn't slept much at night because it had been too cold and we had been watching for some of our troops to try to get across at night. So the day being warmer, some of us slept that day. About dark that night, one of the fellows crawled out on the steel girder to see if there was any way we could make it across. The next morning it was real foggy, so just about daybreak, we noticed an assault boat which had floated down close to shore, and lodged in the debris. We all made our way down, pulled the assault boat out, and managed to get enough paddles out of the debris for seven men. We had just got back to our hole when Bunce saw a German coming down to shore. There was one infantryman that kept standing up and looking around while we were over there. He was standing up when the German came within about ten feet of us. Bunce told him there was a German and to get down. He turned around, saw the German, and froze to the bottom of his hole! The German looked out over the stream at our shore with field-glasses. Then, he went away. After he had gone away, we managed to patch up some machine-gun holes that was in the boat. By this time, the sun had come out again. Some of the infantry boys were so hungry they were chewing the cellophane wrappers off the K-ration. Our troops from the hill across the stream started shooting all around us. We didn't know what was going on, but most of the shells were landing in back of us. They all sounded like duds to us. We thought we had **some** Army! If they were shooting that many duds! But we later found out it was C-rations in the shells! Then the liaison plane came over. He came down real low, right over us. The Germans saw him from the pillbox, and started shooting at him with machine guns. So he went away. We stayed the rest of that day drying our feet with high hopes because we had the boat. Late that evening, one of the wounded boys had stood more than he could stand. He crawled over to us. He started hollering that he had to get out even if he had to

SGT VINCENT E BUNCE of Greenwich Village, New York, who holds a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Silver Star with an Oak Leaf Cluster, and the highest respect for his superb leadership during the period in which his patrol was trapped in "No Man's Land" in the vicinity of Saarlautern, Germany. He is 2nd Squad Leader of the 3rd Platoon.

swim the river. We told him that we were going to get out that night and finally got him quieted down. We waited until it got good and dark that night. Then we loaded the two wounded in the boat. About four of us started pushing the boat upstream in the water. We got about 75 yards upstream then we started pushing the boat out into the river. We walked and pushed the boat in the water until it got too deep. Then we all got in the boat and started rowing for everything we were worth! We finally hit our friendly shore just before we hit the abutment of the bridge on the friendly side. We started trying to carry the wounded men up along the side of the railroad tracks. We were so weak, **all** of us could hardly carry them. Then we met one of our own patrols coming down to the river. They were coming down to try and get across to us. They took the wounded men, and helped us get back to the CP. We had a prayer meeting about every hour of the day while we were over there. And, believe me, I think it really helped.

"When we got to the CP, Bunce and I could hardly walk. Our feet were hurting so bad. They gave us hot coffee, put us on a truck, and sent us to the Aid Station. There, they put us to bed, and wrapped us in blankets. I must have slept about an hour. When I woke up, and my feet were hurting so bad, I couldn't stand it. I started hollering for the medics. Bunce woke up, and started hollering also. They came down and gave us both morphine. The next day, I woke up and there was beds and patients all around me. There was a nurse standing close-by. I asked her where in the hell I was at. She said 'You are in Paris in the Evacuation Hospital'. Then I asked Bunce, who was in a bed right next to my feet, how we had got there. He said we had came by plane. That's where I left Bunce. This was a hell of a situation, but I'm glad I came out of it okay."

We remained in Saarlautern for two weeks, which was the average length of time for a regiment in the city operations. I believe that the 328th relieved the 104th on the night of the 12th-13th of February. I remember that night exceptionally well. "Jake" and I went out to White CP to pick up some of the fellows of the platoon who had been out patrolling with the infantry. "Jake" is T/5 Thomas Pringle of Orange, New Jersey, and don't hold it against me if I mention "Jake" a little too often. His driving throughout operations was a terrific accomplishment. We used to have alot of fun when out with Lt Malone "looking over the situation". Anyway, this particular night of relief, we went out to the 2nd Bn CP over in Fraulautern to pick up Sgt Lee's squad, six in all. Troops of the 328th were walking in to replace the 104th's. Flares were quite the ordinary thing by now, and we got to the point where we wouldn't even freeze or stop while riding along, because, what the heck, it was too late by then! As soon as we reached White CP, we got out of the peep. A flare went up, and we ducked behind a building. A burst of burp-gun fire came meandering down the street, and the guard at the door told us that it was only harrassing fire with which one had to take a chance. Lee and his men were in the message

center. They piled into the jeep and we started back. There were eight of us in that jeep. In case I haven't mentioned it before, there was a long stretch of road on the bridgehead which was continuously under small- arms and artillery fire, and well under enemy observation. You just had to go like hell to get through. Well, when we got to this stretch, "Jake" stepped on it and we took off. Pfc Don Rega was sitting in the front between "Jake" and I. Suddenly a flare went up, and a machine gun opened up on our right, firing over the road in front. "Jake" stopped the jeep. The light of the flare showed us four men crouching to the street and forming a sort of a barricade for us not to pass. We were stopped by then, and Rega opened up with his rifle. As soon as he stopped firing, we took off past the four men who remained in their awkward positions. They looked too much like a Kraut patrol to forget. When we arrived back at the CP, we reported this to Capt Spencer, who called the White and Blue CP's to check up on this unclarified situation. Noone had heard of anyone getting hurt, but there were reports of Krauts operating patrols in that area. A Heinie machine-gun nest had been knocked out in that vicinity that night. Rega smiled a smile of satisfaction. "I knew those bastards were Krauts", he said, "that's why I didn't wait to think twice!" I'm sure he had the right idea. Those buggers were so taken by surprise, they didn't even fire back!

The next day, we were all relieved. Our company moved over to Bedersdorf, about six miles west of Saarlautern, and set up where C Company had been. We had had our taste of Saarlautern. We were now in general support of the division. It was now more-or-less a period of reorganization, of receiving new men, vehicle maintenance, watching dive-bombers come in and get shot down, a few passes to Metz and Paris, and awaiting final word on the patrol which was trapped over on the river near Dillingen. We did not wait too long for this. On the 16th, we heard that the men had been rescued, rather, rescued themselves. Bunce and Webb had been evacuated, Sanders was listed as "Missing in Action", and Sojkowski was recuperating at the battalion Aid Station. A note came down from Capt Scott, Hq Co Commander, "See Sojkowski and get the story on that patrol" he wrote. I went down to the Aid Station in Remering. "Steve" was asleep, so I went back later. When I finally saw him, he was playing "Casina", a favorite card game with the men, with some of the medics. He looked pretty well to me after his great adventure. The doctor was telling me that when they brought him in a couple of nights before, after their escape from their trapped position, the doctor had asked him if he had anything the matter with him. "Steve" answered "Aw, heck, nothing that a pass to Paris couldn't cure!" He got the pass when he arrived in the company after his recuperation. Incidently, I got the story!

Out of our CP at Bedersdorf, the platoons worked on various jobs. The jobs here consisted mostly of road maintenance and repair. The following pictures and captions can explain this:

The 1st Platoon was given a bridge job in the town of Schreckling, a couple of miles southwest of Bedersdorf.

Above, the air compressor was used to supply air to . . .

. . . the pneumatic drill (left) being operated by Sgt Wm Lee of the 1st Platoon.

Men of the 1st Platoon work fast on this Main-Supply-Route bridge, until . . .

The job was completed even to the sign which reads "1st Plat Co B 101st Engr Combat Bn".

Members of the 2nd Platoon working on the maintenance of a secondary road between Voelfling and Villing, Germany. The road was under artillery fire.

Members of the 3rd Platoon working on their corduroy road near Bedersdorf, Germany. Over 1700 logs were laid down. The job was accomplished in ten days and the road was named "The Campbell Road" in memory of 1st Lt Douglas P Campbell, Jr, killed in action near Marimont, France, and former Platoon Leader of the 1st Platoon. Left, digging a rut to lay the base logs in. Right, some of the men of the 3rd Platoon during a break . . .

2nd Platoon men repairing the shell-pocketed road leading into Saarlautern. Pfc Haase is using a 105 mm howitzer shell case to carry hot tar in. Left to right, Pvt John Stanton, New York City, Pvt Frank Voutour of Sommerville, Mass, Sgt Jack McCool of Paris, Texas, Pvt Arthur Dolley of Beverly, Mass, and Pfc Robert Haase of Chicago, Ill. This section of the road is between Villing and Felsberg, Germany.

Our company officers "somewhere in Germany", but actually Bedersdorf, Germany. Left to right:

2nd Lt MILTON J BERNSTEIN of Colorado, and Administrative Officer,
Lt EDWARD WILSON of Texas, and 2nd Platoon Leader,
Capt ROGER Q SPENCER, Jr, of Texas, and Company Commander,
Lt RICHARD X GANNON of Massachusetts, and 3rd Platoon Leader,
Lt JAMES R MALONE of South Dakota, and 1st Platoon Leader.

Our CP remained at Bedersdorf in support of the division until the end of the month. We rested uneasely for fear that we might have had to return to the street-fighting in Saarlautern. Rumors flew thick and wide, as usual. Some said that we'd have to attack straight ahead and out of Saarlautern through the Siegfried. We watched new tanks coming up to replace the old ones. "8-incher" guns moved into the vicinity and everything tended to indicate that a new attack in this area was being planned. In the meantime, the 1st Platoon trained with the apparently new "Snake, Demolition, M2", a long snakey plate construction (about 400 feet in length) used to breach minefields. We thought that sure as hell this was to be used for Saarlautern fighting! Then, on the 26th of the month, Company B was again placed in support of the 104th Inf Regt. We feared that this was it . . . again, and so soon! Instead, we left Bedersdorf at the end of the month and moved north to the town of Halstroff, France. We were located in a German barracks. The 104th CP was in Waldwisse, France, about 5 miles away. The 104th had taken over the 3rd Cav Group's zone of responsibility along the Saar River. The engineers' job here was to check obstacles in the line of defense. Sgt Michael Sochinski's squad of the 2nd Platoon improved a footbridge over the Saar. In this sector, our lines ran right along the river itself, with the enemy in their pillboxes on the other side of the river facing us. The 1st Platoon had men out on various patrols with the 1st Bn of the 104th. None of these patrols, however, managed to cross the river. As the beginning of March came around, we found ourselves a little puzzled. Where was the rest of the division, and what were we doing up here by ourselves? Way back at SHAEF and Army, plans were being drawn up for the big push . . . . .

On the road from Bedersdorf to Halstroff, we passed through Neidaltdorf, Germany, where a triple-triple Bailey Bridge had been constructed over a tributary of the Saar. S Sgt Pionegro, supply sergeant, snapped the above snapshots. Above, a view of the bridge from the 3/4-ton truck. Below, on the bridge itself, showing some men of the company in the 6-ton.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

March 1945

We didn't even have time in which to get accustomed to Halstroff and what it had to offer, if anything. The 90th Inf Div (Texas-Oklahoma) had fought through here. We remained for 6 days, whereupon we left and traveled north along the west side of the Saar to Saarburg, and on into the town of Irsch on the Saarburg beachhead. We were in the process of relieving the 94th Inf Div. Back at Halstroff, units of the 65th Inf Div, who were also coming into the line for the first time, relieved us. For the short time we had in which to talk to them, it was the same old veteran tales we told the 87th back in Alsace-Lorraine when they relieved us fresh from the states. The 94th had plenty to tell us about how this bridge-head was acquired. The tales were none too merry and what was going on up front didn't sound any too healthy. We knew that what had been happening to us was that we were being shuffled around into position, and that this was our zone for attacking. It became all the more evident when division headquarters moved into Serrig, on the bridgehead itself! Up north, our armies were raising hell with the Krauts, in their mad dashes to the Rhine. The 4th Armored movements we read with pride. The 9th Armored suddenly burst out and captured a bridge intact at Remagen across the Rhine and had established a bridgehead successfully on the other side. All along the Rhine, armies were pushing and clearing and mopping up to the Rhine, everywhere but where we now were. It became obvious that this was just about the time to start forward. Besides, the Stars and Stripes told us that the Krauts were all pulling out of the Saar Basin, the area between us and the Rhine. We awaited the order to attack . . . . .

The morning report for 13 March 1945 states that "3rd Platoon moved in support of Task Force Donaldson" and the battalion scrapbook says that "On the morning of March 13th the division launched its attack to the southeast, meeting heavy enemy resistance. The 1st and 3rd Platoons of Co A were attached to B&C Company respectively to demolish pillboxes captured in their zones, and the 3rd Platoon of Company B was attached to Task Force F." Whatever it was, that's the way we went into the big, final push into Germany. We were here introduced to the "task forces" which was something new to us. From our first experiences, we discovered that these task forces packed a hell of a wallop and possessed beaucoup fire power. Task forces we would deal with for the rest of the war. Task forces were new and exciting to us. One felt quite confident, backed by steel and armor, big guns, and air power. The 3rd Platoon was the first to be attached to a task force, a terrific and speedy force,

which stopped only for major engagements in which the enemy was holding out in well-organized defensive positions. Here, the infantry took over and tactfully out-fought the enemy.

Sgt Anthony Buttino, squad leader in the 3rd Platoon from New York City, tells us about that first day with the task force on the final, big push . . .

"The lieutenant woke us up at 0430 (Lt Richard X Gannon of Westboro, Mass). We all loaded on trucks and went to a 'rendezvous point'. We waited there and got instructions about the attack and what to expect. We learned that jump-off time would be at about seven o'clock. Something got screwed up here, because Lt Gannon told me to take four men with me and go with the point of the task force. I went down and reported to the infantry company commander and he told me to go with his headquarters section. Well, the point took off and we remained with the headquarters section. Our platoon was coming up and Lt Gannon told me to catch up with the point. Well, anyway, we started down the road and the task force stopped. This was because our leading tank had been knocked out by our own mines.. Somehow or other the 5th Ranger Bn had left the mines in the road, and hadn't reported leaving them there. The four men with me were Andrews (Pfc Seymour Andrews of Orange, New Jersey), Brown (Pfc James Brown of Spartanburg, SC) and, uh, hell, come to think of it, that's all there were, only three other guys and myself. When we got to where the tank had hit the minefield, we couldn't use our detector because there was too much schrapnel from the tank left on the ground. So we taped off the area, and probed for the mines. However, this couldn't have been done right away because there was sniper fire in the vicinity. Some one was shooting a burp-gun at the tanks, and there were 'screaming-meemies' coming in. We picked up five American mines. We made a by-pass to the left of the road which was used to evacuate casualties and bring up ammunition. Cpl Stephen Sojkowski took five men and started to remove the abatis's which were heavily booby-trapped and mined. This is where you'll have to get one of those guys to continue the story . . . ."

I couldn't get ahold of one of the other men, but I found out as much of the story as I could. It seems as though Cpl Stephen Sojkowski and Pfc Levy Havard of Houston, Texas, noticed trip wires which later turned out to be attached to S-mines. As a matter of fact, the whole abatis, which was approximately 150 feet long was well S-mined. Levy had cut one of the wires and extricated the mine. As he was handing it to Sojkowski, the latter accidently tripped another wire, setting off another mine, and wounding the two men.

The next morning, a tank-dozer was brought down with the 1st Platoon to complete the clearance of the mined abatis. T/5 Gerald Belcher and Pfc Elmer Egolf rode the "dozer", attaching the long logs to the front of the tank by means of a chain, then crouching low behind the turret, in case any mines exploded. And they did. Two tankers were wounded and evacuated, but they were soon replaced and the job was

completed. Egolf and Belcher have both received the Silver Stars for this action. However, the whole platoon deserves mention as far as credit for extrication of this dangerous abatis is concerned. The men exposed themselves to great danger in doing that job. The 2nd Squad went further ahead to another abatis, which fortunately wasn't mined, and took it out. This was a hot little spot since the infantry was being held up here in a little so-called 'sham battle". Pfc Lionel Turcotte of Holyoke, Massachusetts, was one of the members of the 2nd Squad on this mission . . . .

"We all went down there at first, the Captain, Nick (Sgt Nicholas Battaglino of Orange, NJ) Kiser (S/Sgt Joe C Kiser of Valliant, Okla) and myself. We went to inspect the first roadblock and the Captain sent me back to get the tank-dozer. We met the Captain who was on his way back and he guided the tank-dozer down to the roadblock which was mined. I followed with the rest of the men who were carrying tools. While the tank-dozer was working on this first roadblock, Sgt Kiser took the 2nd Squad down ahead to the other roadblock. It was quite a ways from the first. Kiser got at the edge of the woods and pointed it out to Nick. We started walking down to the roadblock, not figuring on any trouble, as we were told. Ludy (Pfc Leo Ludwikowski of Brooklyn, NY) with the mine detector and I start looking for booby-traps and mines at the roadblock. We didn't do more than ten feet of it when all of a sudden a machine-gun opened up with small arms fire on us. Ludy and I were stunned, so we stood there and fell to the ground. The rest of the boys had time in which to run for cover in case artillery started coming in. One infantry platoon of the 104th came and cleared the Heinies away from the roadblock. Then we went to work and took it out by manpower. All we blew was one tree. I know that this roadblock was longer than the first one. Then, when we reported back, we met the Captain, and he told us it was a fine job, and he asked us to go up and help the other squads remove the first roadblock.

We helped the other squads take out the roadblock and then went to work on the road, loading our truck up with rocks and filling the ruts in the road with it. Some of the guys thought this was a hard job, but, what the heck, there's been harder ones!"

At this time, Capt Spencer, our Company Commander, decided to make one little change in assignment of platoons to the three battalions of the infantry regiment. Up to now, he had assigned any platoon to any battalion. From now on, he would keep the 1st Platoon with the 1st Bn, the 2nd with the 2nd Bn, and the 3rd with the 3rd Bn. This worked extremely well and it was kept up until the cessation of hostilities in the ETO.

Also, on the morning of the 13th, the 2nd Platoon moved out to the woods in the vicinity of Serrig in support of the 2nd Bn. They were to clear a road for the TD's to move forward the next morning. To accomplish this job, the "cat" was used. T/5 Charles Blankenberg of Nutley, New Jersey, operated the "cat" this time and has been awarded the Bronze Star for this particular action.

The break-through was taking a little time, courage, and patience. There were plenty of woods, and much of them were enemy-infested. The 80th Inf Div was on our left flank and they had fairly-well caught up to us, having advanced quite a distance ahead of our lines.

I believe that it was the next morning that Capt Spencer took the 1st Platoon with him to a position near the 80th Div infantry, from where our men were to start mine-clearing the road into the next little village. I shall never forget that morning. We reached a junction in the road just before the village. We had driven the trucks right up to the front-line foxholes, plus a self-propelled 155 mm gun which had come along with us to join in the task force which was taking off that morning in this area. A mine-detector crew started sweeping down the road to the amazement of the 80th's infantrymen, who thought we were nuts. We kept going down toward the town. The road went through a small patch of woods, then came out into a clearing, where sat the town of Britten in a smooth valley. Capt Spencer and Lt Malone followed the point. I went along with Sgt Wm Lee as the point, the mine-detector crew following fairly close behind. Things sounded pretty quiet in that valley as we approached the first building in the town. Suddenly, one of the men in the crew behind started calling us and told us to take cover in the building, that the tankers were telling us to get out of sight. All of us went into the building. Looking out the back window, we saw the TD's which had been setting over across the field near some buildings in town. Then all hell broke loose. Machine-guns were firing. Someone saw a Kraut run out of a fox-hole and into a building. The TD's opened up with their large guns. Tracers recocheted into the houses. Artillery came in and landed near the buildings, some setting a house on fire, where upon the civilians ran out and started climbing ladders to throw buckets of water on it. Krauts came running out of nowhere, surrendering. On our right, another task force came into the clearing. The tanks dispersed and started firing into the buildings. I noticed a bunch of civilians standing in a backyard together, waving white flags. One Kraut came walking out of a house waving a white flag on a stick. He started out across the field toward our tanks. For an unknown reason, he stopped and turned around to where he had come from. He was calling someone, practically pleading with him. In desperation he stamped his foot on the ground like a maddened youngster, and sure enough, out of the same house walked another Kraut, meekly.

The tanks were lined up against the edge of the woods now, and a bunch of Krauts came out of a pillbox and surrendered. Lee and I accompanied by Pfc Elmer Egolf decided that we would like to go down and ask the tankers if they wanted us to take the Krauts off their hands so they could continue the attack which was being held up. We left the building and started down the road. The next building was a barn and it had a trench dug around it. Somehow or other, we got the impression that the trench had been recently occupied. We opened the doors of the barn and looked in, calling "Commen sie hier". Noone came out of the

darkness, so we went on up to the tanks. After the tankers had told us that they were handling the prisoners, we started back along the sides of the tanks. We got by a TD, and heard someone yelling "Up there in the woods!" and BOOM! the TD right next to us let go with a round of 90 mm stuff.

The concussion nearly knocked my head off, and I checked to make sure that it wasn't. We made it for the building where the rest of the men were. After a while, things quieted down and the attack was resumed. We were down by the pillbox, and saw the 3rd Platoon's trucks stopping by the barn that Lee, Egolf, and I had checked for Krauts. Out of the hayloft came six Krauts and upon further examination by the 3rd Platoon, there were many weapons in the barn!

The 3rd Squad of the 1st Platoon was detailed to put in a thread-way bridge across a crater further on up the road. The attack resumed.

"The 3rd Squad of the 1st Platoon was detailed to put in a threadway bridge across a crater further on up the road. The attack resumed." Above, the 3rd Squad of the 1st Platoon on the bridge after it was completed. Below, the whole of the 3rd Squad who worked on the bridge. (In the vicinity of Britten, Germany. Photo by T/5 Richard Heinrich.)

I notice in the 2nd Platoon's diary that someone had entered the following for the 17th of March: "Platoon moves out and goes to next town. There appears to be a general break-through of our forces moving toward Kaiserlautern". That's just what it was. Our forces were moving east, and fast. The job now became one of mopping up troops which were caught during their retreat toward the Rhine.

From here on out, it was a large retreat and collapse of the German forces in the ETO. The morale of the men was extremely high. Looking over the territory which our division covered, I discover it to be a tremendous task to try and cover these last few months. I shall, therefore, resort to our own route through Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. By "our own", I mean this company's. However, being that I was with the 1st Platoon most of the way, and that I shall rely on the 1st Platoon's route as attached to Task Force Gladding, I shall try as best I can to include as most of the route of the other two platoons and their exciting incidents as possible. The towns to be mentioned are in chronological order.

When the attack was resumed, after the 3rd Squad of the 1st Platoon had put in a thread-way bridge, the going was much faster. The attackers turned mobile, with infantry riding the tanks, and troops without vehicles hopping the nearest means of transportation. But, before we go ahead, I'd like to mention that as this "sham battle" was going on in Britten, where the Krauts were surrendering left and right to our attached tankers, our Air Force was doing a wonderful job of strafing retreating Krauts up ahead. From where we were, we could see the P-47's diving in on the enemy, strafing and bombing. Well, our task force moved out and ahead to the town of Hausbach. It was here that we saw what the planes had been doing that morning. What a mess! It so happened that the pilots caught a column of retreating Krauts. They were riding through the town in half-tracks, Volkswagons, and other armored vehicles. The aircraft actually had a 'picnic'. The bomb-craters in the town and the demolished buildings were a sight, but the mangled bodies were something in itself. There were two half-tracks with "nerbelwerfers" attached to them parked in an alley. Incidently, those "nerbelwerfers" were our old favorites, the "screaming meemies". The men must have been caught as they tried to get out of the vehicles, and the beating they took was some sight. There were only pieces of blasted bodies lying around. The Heinies had literally been ripped apart. The civilians passed by and looked at the mess incredibly. We went on through the town, and started toward our next objective. On the road out of town, we saw more of this. Legs blown off, vehicles riddled with bullet holes from the strafing planes, guns pulled off the road, were among the sights. The task force moved ahead, but they were suddenly stopped after advancing straight into a little trap, which the Krauts did not succeed in springing. As soon as this pocket was cleared out, they moved on into the next town which was, by now, in flames.

Baths were something we didn't even have time to think about. Above, Pfc Red O'Hanlon of New York City bathes the native way.

We returned to Hausbach that night, after having taken the wrong road and captured four prisoners; members of the 3rd Platoon were with us and we piled the prisoners on the fenders of the trucks for the ride back into town. Back in town, we picked out a house as far away from the mess in the town as we could get. We remained there that night with Pfc Leo Ludwikowski of Brooklyn as our liaison man at the Red CP.

The next morning, the attack was resumed. This gets monotonous after a while, because what we actually thought of this stuff was that we'd get up early, roll up our bedrolls, munch away on a juicy K-ration, then take off on our ride through the route of advance. On this particular day, it became obvious that the Germans were really running. The 3rd Platoon jeep, as well the 1st Platoon's were out following the leading elements of the task force. I guess we must have been a little late in catching up with them in one town, because there they told us that the task force was about 5 or 6 miles away already. We got into the jeeps and started off. All the bridges along the way had been prepared for

demolition, but somehow or other, and we knew why, the Krauts didn't have time in which to blast them. We stopped at every bridge and yanked out the igniting parts of the charges, at doubletime pace, jumping back into the vehicles, and following the infantry. We passed through Hargarten and Reimsbach, before we stopped at Oppen. The company moved up to Oppen the next day after the task force had been halted by blown bridges up ahead in the town of Aussen. A self-propelled gun over on the other side of the river was making it hot for our men. T/5 Morris Reisberg, jeep driver for the 3rd Platoon, was slightly wounded by schrapnel near the 2nd Bn CP in Aussen. We remained in Oppen that night, awaiting the arrival of Bailey Bridge equipment with which to bridge the river up ahead in Aussen. This did not arrive until early morning, and by that time, things had quieted down a bit. The 1st and 3rd Platoons moved ahead into Aussen and started the construction of the bridge, but "Corps Engineers" relieved them soon and our men went ahead with the task force. We waited up in Goldbach, a little town on the outskirts of Aussen, and on the east side of the river. I couldn't figure out those people up there. I remember that it was Sunday, and that there was an un-observed enemy self-propelled gun firing at the men who where constructing the Bailey Bridge in town. And yet, with war taking its course right in their back-yards, these civilians walked the streets in their Sunday dress, taking the children for a walk. This just about made me feel like knocking one of them for a loop. Here we were risking our skins, and the Germans are out taking a Sunday-afternoon stroll!

That night, the night of the 18th of March, the Company stayed in Gresaubach. While we were setting up for the night, truckloads of pri-

Action up ahead, the town's under fire, and our trucks move forward into Aussen, Germany.

soners were passing by to the rear, an exhibition which startled us at first.

Following are the towns we covered on the 19th: Dorsdorf, Steinbach, Thalexweiler, Dirmingen, Marpingen, Urexweiler, and Neider-Linxweiler. The task force seemed to be riding straight ahead from town to town without meeting much opposition. From the maps we gathered that our objective would be Kaiserslautern, but we weren't too sure.

The 1st Platoon took up quarters in Neider-Linxweiler, while Company Headquarters stayed behind at Urexweiler. We settled down in Neider-Linxweiler in a comfortable home, just right for the platoon. The 10th Armored was moving through the town, and we saw the new light tanks for the first time. In the middle of the night, some men of the 3rd Platoon came in. Some bridge had caved in back a ways and a scout car had toppled over its side. The 3rd Platoon men were to detour the traffic around another way, and they weren't any too sure as to which way would be the safest. I was down at Red CP with Lt Malone when about 8 Frenchmen, who had just been freed, came walking down the road. They stopped by a tank which was parked near the bridge, and from where I stood, I knew that the tankers didn't understand what in hell the Frenchmen were saying. I, thinking I would be of use with what-little French I knew, went over. A 1st Lt from the 1st Bn asked me to interpret for him, and I did. The Frenchmen wanted to find out the road to the Rhine and Paris. We asked a few questions and they answered promptly, at the completion of which the 1st Bn lieutenant told me to tell them that there'd be a truck coming to pick them up and take them all the way to Paris. Man, you should have seen the expressions on their faces! This system was okay here, because we were only beginning our rapid sweep across Germany, but later on, when hundreds and thousands of displaced personnel started their long trip home, mostly by foot, this process was replaced by the Army unit responsible for handling displaced persons. The 3rd Platoon spent that night repairing the collapsed bridge, and the next morning we took off again with our task force.

March 20th was another progressive day. We took Dorrenbach, Breitenbach, Altenkirchen, Dittweiler, Brücken, Ohmbach, Steinbach, Haschbach, Bärsborn, Dietschweiler, Nanzweiler, and Katzenbach, staying in the last one that night. Of those towns, the one I remember best is Nanzweiler. Why? Listen, I'll tell you.

We drove into the town and found that our tanks had already gone through. There were alot of civilians around who were cheering us on. Well, we stopped the platoon trucks near the bridge in the center of town, while a reconnaissance was made to find out the new location of the forward elements. Most of the civilians standing around and looking so happy were Russians. They were slave-factory workers in a plant in Zweibrucken, a rather large industrial town in Germany. It seems that when the last push started, our planes dive-bombed the factories in Zweibrucken, and the Russians had come to Nanzweiler

for refuge. Well, there was this stout-looking German school-teacher standing near-by, and since I was having trouble trying to understand or speak Russian, she thought she'd "butt in" and help me. Surprisingly, she spoke English very well. I asked her "What are all these Russians doing here?"

"What are they doing here?" she repeated. "Why they were bombed by your planes, and had to leave Zweibrücken to come here."

I looked at her in amazement. She seemed to be talking in a world of her own.

"I don't see why your planes bomb the Germans" she continued, "the German people don't want war. They give you no trouble."

What I wanted to tell her would have been useless, and I'm glad that just about this time Lt Malone called me away from her. Here we had been slogging our way across France, Luxembourg, and Germany, fighting every bit of the way, and she wanted to tell me that the German people don't want war!

We caught up with the forward elements at Katzenbach after we got lost and had to resort to cross-country traveling. At Red CP in Katzenbach, we found out that one regiment of the 80th Div was in Kaiserslautern, so since the platoon was on its way with the rest of the company, we decided to go ahead with Red CP which was moving into the next town of Ramstein. We crossed one of Adolph's super-highways which was still under construction, and drove into Ramstein behind a scout car, which was loaded down with infantry and running on a flat which was slowly ripping to shreds. Ramstein was a new-looking town. The buildings that lined the streets on the outskirts of town were pleasant. Red CP (1st Bn CP) was located in a beautiful doctor's home which looked more like a private hospital. When we got there, we went slogging our way up the stairs, looking over the house. The civilians didn't stop doing what they were busy at. And even after I opened one room and found a woman bathing her little baby they went on as if unheded by our presence. What the hell do these people think we're doing over here.... going on a sight-seeing tour? I was mad as hell. We left Ramstein and went back to join the platoon and company for chow in Katzenbach.....

The next morning, Lt Gannon with Pfc James Brown driving, came along with us on a little reconnoissance. We left Katzenbach and the platoon with instructions to be ready to move at a moment's notice. We crossed a beautiful super-highway, and went south to the town of Landstuhl, where things were really cooking, but in a nice way. Our division had made contact with the 7th Army at Landstuhl, and traffic rolling forward was a spectacular sight. We drove into town and happened to fall in line with a tank and tank destroyer convoy which was passing through. Before we knew it, we had been traveling along for a few miles. Then, we stopped in the next town, called Kindsbach, and waited until the traffic died down a bit before returning to the company. That was some sight, standing there on the side of the road watching our

armored and allied might go past in chase of the Krauts. Tank after tank, loaded with infantry roared past with a deafening sound at about 40 miles per hour. Then came TD's, riding infantrymen. Trucks. Jeeps. Half-tracks. Men. Machines. Might. Great might rushing through Hitler's decreasing Deutschland.

We waited about a half an hour and still they rolled past, units of the 45th Inf Div of the 7th Army intermingled with units of the 26th Div of the 3rd Army. The two armies had finally met. We got into the jeeps and started back to Katzenbach where we found the platoon all loaded and ready to leave except that one squad was sent out by Capt Spencer to clear a road of mines. Lt Malone told Sgt Kiser to bring the platoon along to Landstuhl, and we took off to find the squad which was out on the mine-clearing job. We found them somewhere in the woods, took them into Landstuhl, where we met the rest of the platoon, and started off out of Landstuhl on the road to Kaiserslautern. On the way, we caught up with our task force. On the outskirts of Kaiserslautern, we were suddenly stopped. Everybody. All those long columns of vehicles rushing forward after the 7th Army-3rd Army meeting were suddenly stopped and held up just before entering Kaiserslautern. The 80 th Div, being that it was the first in Kaiserslautern, had priority on the roads throughout the city. Everyone else would either have to find a detour or wait patiently until after the 80th had gone through. Colonels bawled out MP's. Generals bawled out Colonels. MP's spoke harshly to officers trying to get their men through. And we sat and waited while the 80th went through.

THE RUINS OF KAISERSLAUTERN . . . .

. . . as snapped by T/4 Edward Lalli of the 3rd Plat.

I don't think it's at all fair to tell how we managed to get through in no time at all, but it seems as though there was a tremendously important job up ahead for the engineers, and the MP let us through! Of course, I don't think that so-called important job was ever recorded in the annals of the War Departement. But we got through and managed to catch up with the task force later on. We didn't go all the way into Kaiserslautern, but we did manage to get a good idea of how badly the city was shot up and bombed. The railroad yards on the left as we neared the town was a good example, as were the factories and environments within the town. Large craters marked the remains of where-once-stood buildings. We went south into the town of Dansenberg, where we finally met our task force. There was a short break before we went ahead. We went eastward toward the town of Mölschbach, and just before we got there someone asked for the engineers to go back and try to get a tank out of where it was hanging over the side of a cliff! Well, someone spotted our "cat" tagging along behind the company and the "cat" was brought up to help with the job. We worked on until about dusk, when finally the "cat" became stuck right behind the tank on the side of that steep hill. When we left to catch up with company, there was a TD, a tank, and our beloved "cat", all stuck on the side of the hill; one push either way would easily send them tumbling down the side of the hill!

Traveling on roads which led for the most part through woods that night, we caught up with the company in Waldleiningen. Everyone had had supper and were now in bed, or a reliable facsimile thereof . . . . . the CP was located in the only available house left in town, and the platoon men were sleeping in some sort of an uncompleted cellar on hay that they had brought in from a near-by barn. They had the story to tell of how the convoy they were in was going up the side of this hill. There was a cliff downward to the right, and a steep climb up on the left of the road. Suddenly the convoy stopped and the order came back to turn around! How they managed to turn those trucks and trailers around under those circumstances remains an engineer miracle to this date!

The next morning, a squad of the 1st Platoon went back to our stuck "cat" near the tank and TD. They were given directions as to where to meet us in case we moved out. When we saw them later on, they informed us that they had to dig out the three vehicles and that it worked fairly well.

A requisition for an advanced quartering party for the engineers came down from regimental and Lt Malone was picked to go. "Jake" and I went along, of course, and we left Waldleiningen in a big rush about noon that day. Before we stopped monkeying around looking for quarters and getting settled for the night, we had traveled 45 miles in a northeasterly direction. Here are the towns we covered that day before we finally settled down for the night in Eppelsheim, awaiting the arrival of the company: Hochspeyer, Fischbach, Enkenbach, Münchweiler, Langmeil, Standenbühl, Dreisen, Marnheim, Kirchheim-Bolanden,

Morschheim, Alzey, Dintesheim, and finally Eppelsheim. The company was scheduled to arrive during the night with the 104th Inf Regt. Then they told us that they probably wouldn't arrive until the next morning. We went back to one of the houses that we had picked out for company and hit the hay at about 0100, 23 March 45. The lady had made our feather-beds up with nice clean Rinso-white sheets and pillow cases. We stripped clear of our dirty clothing, and got into bed. Somehow or other, we didn't feel any too safe in that town. There wasn't anyone else in the joint but us and the advanced quartering party of the 102nd Field Artillery. Besides, while we were having supper (K-and C-rations) downstairs earlier that evening, four men of the 4th Armored division stopped by because they had seen our jeep parked outside, and told us that they had just cleared that town out the day before, and that there were plenty of Krauts still roaming around in those parts. I pulled the cover over me and cuddled deep into that soft and feathery bed. "Jake" was doing the same and so was Lt Malone. Outside, a queer sound started to come up louder and louder. It sounded like someone chopping wood at about 1:30 in the morning! We got out of bed slowly and went to the window in the next room. We couldn't see anyone out there, and still the chopping persisted. The moon was out nice and bright and one could almost pick out a toothpick down in the yard. As we stood there at the window, the three of us clad only in our underwear, we heard another funny sound.

It sounded as if someone was in the house, and coming slowly up the stairs. Lt Malone had locked the door before we started to go to bed. And now, we were all rushing for our weapons. By the time we had retrieved them, the sound had ceased, and we stood there at the door to the bedroom, Lt Malone with his carbine, and "Jake" and I with our "grease-guns" ready to fire at the slightest move. It was so funny, I started to laugh. I tried to hold it back as best I could because I knew that Lt Malone was madder than hell. But, still I couldn't hold it back. It's that type of a giggle one gets when he is in a tight spot. I've had it happen to me before but this was hardly the time to have it again. The scene there in that bedroom was so funny that I couldn't resist my laughing almost out loud. I muffled the laughter trying to keep my weapon steady as Lt Malone opened the door wide open with a big sudden pull. There was noone there, not even after we had checked every room in the house and gone downstairs and locked the doors. It was then that I let out the laughing that I had been holding back. By the light of the flashlight, we made our way back upstairs and to bed for a couple of hours . . . . .

We were up again at 0430, and on the way to find out the whereabouts of the company which hadn't arrived as yet. We finally left Alzey, where we had been waiting, and started back to see if we could contact the company. We met them back in Marnheim, and led them into Alzey where Lt Malone left me out to wait for straggling vehicles. They went on into Eppelsheim. The stragglers came breezing into Alzey

T/5 Winford Ray of Mitchell, Indiana, left, and Pfc Joseph Cosentino of Orange, New Jersey, right, at Eppelsheim, Germany. They are both in the 1st Platoon.

about an hour later, and I guided them out to Eppelsheim, where the rest of the company had started setting up. No sooner did we get back, than there came another request for a quartering party!

We left promptly for Vendersheim, traveling through Hangenwelsheim, Blödeschheim, Monzernheim, Dautenheim, Gau-Heppenheim, Dittelsheim, Albing, Ensheim, Spiesheim, and Wörrstadt.

Before I forget it, someone had slipped the word to us the night before that the 5th Inf Div was planning a Rhine-crossing that night. We anxiously awaited reports on their crossing, especially now that we were almost on the Rhine itself. The word came that it had been extremely successful and that there had been hardly any casualties.

Near Vendersheim, the 145th Engr Combat Bn was billeted for work on the Rhine crossing. Lt Malone, who had come to us from the 145th, immediately went over to look up some of his old friends, and while we were there we were fortunate enough to have a hot chow. We left after chow and went back to Wörrstadt, where we were supposed to meet the company coming in from Eppelsheim. It was getting dark now, and enemy planes came in for an attempted bombing of our bridges across the Rhine which were then being constructed. All night long, huge 25-ton pontoons went past toward the river, the trucks returning empty later on. The planes kept coming in at irregular intervals, and as soon as they'd get anywhere near the bridge, the ack-ack units would

Kraut planes strafed and bombed us, and were usually brought down this way . . .

Pfc Lester Bourgeois of New Orleans, La., and the 1st Platoon. This is in Vendersheim, Germany, just before crossing the Rhine. He is holding a captured German pistol, and has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

open up, presenting an elaborate exhibition of tracers and shell-explosions in the air. The whole sky would light up as countless hidden anti-aircraft guns opened up on these "suicide" planes. We were to witness many more of these exhibitions while near the Rhine.

The company finally showed up sometime around midnight. "Jake" and I guided them down to Vendersheim, where the town was practically all ours. We got to sleep right away. All but me, I guess. I remember needing a shave which I corrected before getting to sleep.

The next morning, we left again, the company's quartering party. At regimental, Lt Malone was told that the regiment was moving up to take the 90 th Div's place after it left to cross the Rhine. We were scheduled to follow the 90th across. The regimental quartering party left for the town of Mommenheim, going through Udenheim, Hahnheim, Selzen from Neider-Saulheim, the location of Regimental CP. At Mommenheim which was only a stone's toss from the Rhine, we picked out

enough houses to quarter our company. The road leading into Oppenheim was covered with seemingly long endless columns of waiting vehicles, vehicles which would soon be over on the other side chasing Jerry across the plains of Germany. Soon, we figured, we, too, would be sweating out that line. Instead, everything was changed that day. We waited on the outskirts of Mommenheim for the company until after dark. No company. Finally, down the road came Matson and Bowes in the Captain's jeep, with orders for Lt Malone to report to regimental as the company's quartering party! The quartering party was to cross the Rhine that night. We returned to regimental and were immediately placed into the line of jeeps which constituted the quartering party. Somehow or other we were to have priority on one of the bridges at Oppenheim. A war correspondent for The Boston Traveler, by the name of Tully, was along with us. Strange as it may seem, I didn't feel too excited or nervous. Ordinarily, we'd have looked forward to the crossing of the Rhine as a great invasion. It now appeared to be nothing less than merely crossing another river. Furthermore, we'd have nothing to do with bridging it. I threw a cover over my legs and waited. The order came to "wind 'em up!", and we started across secondary roads which led across fields for part of the way, and came to a stop beside some of our anti-aircraft 90mm. guns. I expected some of those foolish Jerry planes to come swooping down any minute and prayed that it wouldn't happen during our crossing. We waited there on that open field until someone went ahead to check and make sure we were ready to cross, unhindered. They came back, and we left for Oppenheim, and the Rhine. All went well. The smoke pots which were kept continuously smoking the area around the bridges were passed and we started out on a pontoon bridge. Way out in the middle of the river, some engineers were busy patching holes where a bomb or machine gun fire had hit the pontoons. We tried to count the pontoons, but were unsuccessful. There were too many other things, so something had to be left out. Once on the other side, the convoy kept up its pace and we drove straight into the town of Leeheim, which was in flames. Outside the town sat elements of the 4th Armored Division. In an empty field beside them, the company would assemble after its crossing which didn't take place until the next morning. We met them in Leeheim, and led them out to the field. The 4th Armored was reported to be miles ahead and still going. Hundreds and hundreds of prisoners came marching back, and it looked as if the Krauts were surrendering **en masse.** Leeheim had been shelled with phosphorus shells the night before and many American vehicles were reduced to ashes, some of them still burning while we passed.

We didn't stay in that field that night as we were afraid we might have had to. We loaded up after an early supper, and passed through Wolfskehlen on the way to Goddelau, where we "shacked up" for the night.

In the course of the night, enemy planes paid our Rhine bridges a few calls. Many of them attempted suicide dives and that's just how things

ended up for them. We watched the ack-ack fire from our town (Goddelau) and one 90 mm shell which didn't go off in the air, came whistling in and exploded behind our quarters in the field. Luckily, noone was hurt.

Reports were good. Our troops were off again maintaining the same speed they pushed forward with before the Rhine. Newsmen couldn't keep up with the 4th Armored, and neither could we. We continued our mopping-up operations across Germany.

— CROSSING THE RHINE ON 25 MARCH 45 —

(as snapped by Pfc Joseph Cosentino of Orange, NJ.)

Once over the Rhine, mass was held for the Catholic personnel by a Chaplain of the 4th Armored Division. Many of the men attended this mass of Thanksgiving.

Krauts streamed past to the rear and the PW enclosures were overflowing during the final big push.

In some towns in Germany, the civilians had already started taking down the roadblocks by the time we arrived, left. Right, a typical roadblock, which the 2nd Platoon ran across "somewhere in Germany".

Again, we glanced ahead on the map, and discovered that we would soon have to cross another river, the Main. From the Stars and Stripes we gathered that the 4th Armored was advancing on Frankfurt à Main.

Our next location was Babenhausen, and our leading elements paved the way with no opposition whatsoever. We made one long leap from Goddelau to Babenhausen going through Erfelden, Crumstadt, Hahn, Pfungstadt, Modau, Eberstadt, Nieder-Ramstadt, Ober-Ramstadt, Rossdorf, Gundershausen, Dieburg, and Altheim. It was on this particuiar trip that I recalled the different signs back in the Saar Basin which were sprawled on walls and sides of buildings all along the way. Some of them read "Onward, Slaves of Moscow!" and "See Germany and Die!". Well, on this particular trip from Goddelau to Babenhausen, these sarcastic Nazi announcements came into my mind.. We were seeing Germany, and we'd admit that it was a beautiful country, what we saw of it. I particularly recall one valley whose description I don't believe I could justify through words. The grass was just beginning to get green, and there was a water-mill at the bottom of the valley toward which ran a road, more-or-less of a driveway, lined all the way down with some type of handsome trees. "See Germany and Die!" Sure, we saw Germany, but the Jerries paid, and not us. Reports and statistics prove that.

We went into Babenhausen and prepared to remain there that night. I believe that the task force was being held up on account of the possible river-crossing ahead. On the long straight road between Babenhausen and Zellhausen, we discovered a Wehrmacht motor pool in the woods, where there were many abandoned automobiles and trucks, as well as a few new ones. Many GI's were sporting their new limousines, captured from the retreating Krauts.

ASCHAFFENBURG stands out more prominent than any other town or city after the crossing of the Rhine, even though the whole company was not involved here. The 4th Armored had gone out of its zone of operation and gone down to Aschaffenburg and captured a railroad bridge intact. This bridge was immediately reconverted by their engineers into a traffic bridge. Things were hot in Aschaffenburg. The 4th Armored broke thru on a mission to relieve a prison camp 60 miles behind enemy lines, but they hadn't cleared the town on the way through. The 1st Bn of the 104th Inf Regt was ordered to the Aschaffenburg bridgehead to hold it until the 45th Div of the 7th Army came up on our right flank. Naturally the 1st Platoon of Baker Company went along as the supporting engineers. The converted railroad bridge had to be maintained. When we first reached the position, the Krauts were firing a self-propelled gun at traffic moving over the bridge onto the bridgehead. It made it necessary to go like hell when crossing. Fortunately those Krauts were "lousy" shots and they never got anybody. Our men worked on the maintenance of the approaches to the bridge.

We started down the road which went into town toward the blown bridge. Our purpose was to find a place to stay at for the night. We

passed our last troops in that area, not knowing what in hell we were doing at the time. Suddenly there was a rifle shot, and the zing! of the bullet sounded kinda close. Lt. Malone told Pringle ("Jake") to turn the jeep around. Whoever was sniping was well-concealed for I couldn't see him anywhere around except for the fact that he could have been in one of the buildings nearby. The bugger fired about four more shots, while we turned around and beat hell out of there. We never got to the bridge, and we never even got anywhere near the town, except for seeing it from a short distance. When we came back to where the platoon was waiting at the farm, a boy from the 4th Armored told us that his Captain and driver had gone down that same road toward the blown bridge the afternoon before, but that they hadn't come back as yet!

We stayed at the farm as long as the 1st Bn held the beachhead, and that was until the 45th Inf Div caught up with us. Their engineers came in to relieve us and their infantry relieved our infantry. We reported back to Babenhausen.

Three members of the German Wehrmacht, sexy spies behind our lines at Aschaffenburg.

However, we mustn't forget another incident that occurred there on that Aschaffenburg peninsula. Lt Malone had sent me out on a reconnaissance of the roads on the peninsula. The 45th was moving in with great speed now, and we felt quite assured that everything was pretty safe around there. We met Capt Spencer at a blown railroad bridge in the town of Stockstadt. Bowes and Matson were with him. He was trying to find a suitable place for the crossing of the river by foot troops. T/5 George VanHorne of Tenafly, New Jersey, was driving the jeep in place of "Jake" that day, who needed a little rest. Van and I were speaking to the Captain and he let us in on what he was looking for. We looked down the river toward Aschaffenburg and saw these locks which looked as though they could be used for foot troops. The Captain told us that he was going down there to look at the locks. And as we left him, I told him that we'd also drop down there and see what they were like. Well, we continued with our road reconnaissance for about 15 more minutes, and then took off on a road which lead out toward the locks on the river. There didn't seem to be any GI's in the area, and we passed the last building on shore before going out across a field toward the locks which we could now see. As we started out across the field, driving around a deep crater, we noticed a few Krauts and a civilian. The Krauts jumped into holes and the civilian hit the dirt. Nothing happened, so I told Van to go ahead. We kept going slowly, when all of a sudden, they opened up with rifle and machine-gun fire. Bullets were whizzing and cracking past in every which way, and I could hear Van cursing as he turned the jeep around quickly and beat hell out of there. I could see them with their heads partly showing, so I grabbed the "grease gun" and let loose. That quieted the firing for a moment, at least until we got out of that hole. When we got back on the highway, we asked one of the officers in the 45th Div convoy where his CP was, and we went down there to report the incident to them. We checked ourselves and the vehicle for bullet holes and found one in a bedroll in the back of the jeep. The bullet had gone straight through, and alignment showed that it must have gone between the two of us!

When we arrived back at company in Babenhausen, they told us about how Bowes had been shot in the rear while going out to the locks with the Captain. They, too, had gone into the same trap. There was one bullet-hole through the back of Matson's jeep and there was blood on the floor. Bowes had been evacuated, and spent about three months in the hospital before returning to the company at the end of the war.

Our next major task was to see to it that our infantry regiment crossed the Main as quickly as possible, and to do this, the 2nd Platoon was sent out to two ferry points, one at Seligenstadt, and the other at Klein Krotzenburg. The 2nd Platoon's job here was to operate the ferries and direct the traffic across the river Main. Some of the company was fortunate enough to go up and cross the river at Hanau, where the 11th Armored had captured a bridge intact and had priority on the bridge

until their whole division was across. Fortunately, we were lucky to cross there, and the company assembled in the town of Kahl à Main.

The 2nd Platoon then moved out in support of the 2nd Bn. While the Company Headquarters Platoon remained in Kahl à Main that night, the 1st Platoon moved ahead through Wolfgang and Rückingen to Langenselbold, where they remained that night in a beautiful home full of good souvenirs and liquor. The company came up and joined us in the morning, and we all left together in following up the infantry. We passed through Rothenbergen, Lieblos, NiederGrundau, Mittel Grundau, Hain-Grundau and Breitenborn before we stopped at Wittgenborn for the night. South of Wittgenborn, elements of the 1st Bn were having trouble getting into the town of Wachtersbach. Those who were there then had gone in via Wittgenborn, but there were others who had tried to go directly into the town from Breitenborn, and had consequently met up with a stubborn pocket of resistance.

At approximately 0400 Easter Sunday morning, the 2nd Squad of the 1st Platoon, led by Sgt Nicholas Battaglino of Orange, New Jersey, were sent out to remove the roadblock where these troops were being held up.

The squad worked diligently and courageously while small-arms fire and artillery whizzed past. The incident was turning out to be quite a battle. One infantry boy suddenly keeled over and fell to the ground. He had been shot through the back. The squad worked on, removing the huge logs which had been lodged deep into the ground. When they had finished, they found that there was a crater about 15 feet deep left. Everyone chipped in here, even the Krauts which were being herded back to the rear, and the crater was filled promptly. The troops resumed there advance into the town of Wachtersbach.

This Easter Sunday was one I shall not forget so easily. We were at 1st Bn CP in Wachtersbach awaiting Battaglino's return. While we were waiting there in the square of the town, a jeep came rushing in with a body of an American boy on it. Another lad was steadying the body on the jeep. "Where's the medics?" the kid asked even before the jeep stopped. A medic came over to the body. The boy had been shot in the chest. "It's too late" the medic said. The kid was almost in tears and he looked at us and said "On Easter Sunday, too. Jeepers Christmas, why do things like this have to happen? The last fellow that was killed was killed on his birthday." And he stuttered and couldn't talk anymore. Yes, why do things like that have to happen? . . . . "These are the times that try men's souls . . . ." Yes, even on Easter Sunday!

Liaison between the company and the 104th Inf Regt was kept by T/5 John Mayoka of Brooklyn, NY, and the 2nd Platoon.

ALL THE WAY ACROSS GERMANY IN
April 1945

(It would be well to remember the town of Wachtersbach for future reference.)

Our next move took us quite a distance. Our advanced elements were moving toward the town of Schlüchtern, and we left Wachtersbach and headed northeast through Neuenschmidten, Udenhain, Romstahl, Kerbersdorf, Sarrod, Ulmbach, Kressenbach, past Breitenbach and up to a railroad underpass which was suddenly blasted away in front of troops as they reached it. The vehicles were immediately left and everyone scrambled for cover. Observation into the town of Schlüchtern revealed the enemy retreating over the hills on the other side of town. However, they still found time in which to send back a few 88's and armor-piercing shells. One infantry boy was instantly wounded. Our trucks with the attached trailers were turned around and sent back. Our cannons and artillery moved into position and the infantry dug in on the hill overlooking the town. The company moved into Breitenbach, and we joined them back there a little later. Enemy mortars and artillery came screaming in. And our artillery opened up, with the main objective of blasting the town clear off the map. Things looked pretty bad at first. That night, Capt Spencer, Lt Malone, and myself drove down as far as we could and observed the burning town through field glasses. The 1st Platoon was sent out the next morning to clear the debris from under the underpass with the help of the "cat". Charlie Blankenberg operated the "cat" and the job was completed within an hour-and-a-half. While this was being done, we climbed a steep hill to the 1st Bn OP, keeping on the alert all the way, and observed what was going on in town. Our artillery was still landing in certain sections, as directed by the observers. And the infantry fought its way from house to house. Oddly, church bells were ringing at about every ten-minute interval down in the town. We left the OP and started back down to the underpass, where the men had just about completed the job of clearing a passage for vehicles. Just about the time that we got there, the Krauts decided to begin tossing in 88's which appeared to be quite accurate. I guess they were mad at us for having cleared the underpass so well and so quickly.

We returned to company back in Breitenbach, only to find out that, the night before, the Krauts had launched a counter-attack on our open right flank, in the vicinity of Wachtersbach, our Easter Sunday location. No singular vehicles were allowed to travel to the rear. Convoys were to be organized to defend themselves in case of ambush or attacks which were

Engineermen-turned-infantrymen. In this case, members of another company of the battalion at an outpost.

becoming frequent happenings by then. Liaison became dangerous. The rear-echelon was catching hell from what we could gather. Things were worst off in the rear than they were up where we were. The only thing we seemed to be perturbed about was whether or not our mail would come through.

We never did get to go into Schlüchtern. But we did go up on a demolition job to where the 3rd Bn and 3rd Platoon were. It all turned out to be a false request and the only demolition done was the blasting open of a door. The 3rd Platoon was then in Neuhof, and to get there we had to go a round-about way since the Germans had penetrated a little into our right flank in that area. Krauts were running around loose in the near-by woods. On our way back, we were stopped by a jeep-load of infantrymen who told us to watch out between the towns of Wallroth and Hintersteinau. We kept our eyes pealed and found two Jerries who had been shot, one under the armpit and the other through the chest. An ambulance picked them up and took them in to an aid station.

We returned back to company, who were in preparation to leave for our next destination. Again, Lt Malone was assigned the job of bringing up the "cat". We traveled for 30 miles through Unterstork, Magdlos, Buchenrod, Hauswurz, Brandlos, Poppenrod, Hosenfeld, Giesel, Istergiesel, Zell, Neider-Robe, and Sickles into Fulda, where we found the company already setting up. Regimental and division headquarters had moved into town. We were a little uncertain as to where the line was from here. We settled down in a beautiful apartment house. On the way into Fulda, we passed a cemetery on the left-hand side of the road, where row upon row of coffins awaited burial. The town itself, was pretty-well bombed, and the streets were quite cluttered with debris. The 2nd Platoon worked with the "cat" removing some of this debris, while the 1st Platoon was called up to the 101st Inf sector to assist Able Company on the maintenance of a road. The road was in a muddy mess and we helped Able Company personnel cut branches and twigs to throw into the ruts. Vehicles were going through very slow, bumping and jouncing along in an uncomfortable manner. We left that area when the job was completed and returned to Fulda.

We seemed to be moving with leaps and bounds now, because again we made a move of 40 miles through Lehnerz, Marbach, Rückers, Hünfeld, Rasdorf, Schleid, Kranlucken, Bremen, Geblar, Oberalba, Dermbach, Wiesenthal, Rossdorf, Eckhardts to Hümpfershausen. While at Hümpfershausen, the company was credited with capturing 9 prisoners, one officer and 8 enlisted men. The 1st Platoon was taken out to construct a steel-threadway bridge with two shallow-water threstles near Niederschmalkalden, Germany. At its completion, the platoon returned to the company in Hümpfershausen.

On the 7th of April, minus the 3rd Platoon which was being held in support of the 3rd Battalion of the 104th Inf Regt, we made another major move through Schwarzbach, Schwalungen, Wasungen, Meiningen, Helba, Kühndorf, Rohr, Dillstädt, and Dietzhausen to Mäbendorf where

we settled temporarily until the company was called out to outpost the town of Suhl, which had been reported by interrogation of a German PW as the objective of a Heinie counter-attack that night. We took over a factory on the outskirts of Suhl, and bedded down for the night, with a machine-gun nest being manned all night and awaiting the expected counter-attack, which never did come. The next day, the rest of the company moved into Suhl into a beautiful mansion. The whole company assembled here again, and the men spent their sparetime piecing together "32" pistol-parts which had been found in a pistol factory in the town. Almost everyone owned a pistol by the time we left Suhl.

Our route of advance led southeast. And we moved in leaps and bounds from one town to the next.

Passing through Hirschbach, and Erlau, we arrived in Schleusingen, Germany, where we spent two nights. No sooner did we get there and unloaded the trucks, than a couple of Heinie planes came swooping in strafing the traffic out on the main highway. One of the planes was shot down, and we watched it sputter down to a crash-landing about 800 yards away.

An incident that happened while we were at Schleusingen is one of those things one hears about, but never believes it was actually done. A reinforcement in the 2nd Platoon, who had come to us after seeing quite a bit of service in Africa and Italy, was telling the men that in Italy, they used to take a bazooka shell, hit it against a wall or hard surface, then throw it into the Krauts. Apparently, our men knew better, and told him that this was impossible because there was an instantaneous cap on the head of a bazooka shell. To prove his argument, he went ahead and tried it. He took a bazooka shell out, slammed it against a wall, and the explosion literally knocked him to pieces. Furthermore, this kid was sweating out return to the states, being that he had so much time in "on the line". For quite some time before this happened he had been trying to make the rest of us believe that he was a little bit "off the beam". He finally proved it. To avoid any embarrassment, we shall dispense with mentioning his name.

From Schleusingen, we moved on to Schalkau, going through Ratscher, Wiedersbach, Brattendorf, Brunn, Eisfeld, Gundelswind. Our quarters in Schalkau were at a steam-bath house. Some of the men caught up on their baths by making a fire in the boiler to heat some water. Others fried eggs and made soup for supper. And before I forget this, "Haben Sie Ire?" is a question that almost any GI who had anything to do with operations in Germany knows. "Haben Sie Ire?", pardon the spelling, is how one asks the "fraus" and "fräuleins", or any civilians, as far as that goes, if they have any eggs to spare. In some cases it didn't make any difference, 'cause we'd take them anyway! Fried eggs came in damn handy, and after a while, we started to get sick and tired of them. Those were the days when we could eat six or seven fried eggs without even having to wait in chow-line for them.

Sonneberg, our next location, was a larger town. We went ahead again as the company's quartering party, Lt Bernstein riding in the back seat of the jeep with me, "Jake" driving, and Lt Malone sitting in the front. We went through Grumpen, Erfelder, Forschengereuth, Bettelhecken, to Sonneberg. As soon as we reached the town we started looking for a suitable location, of which there were beaucoup. As we turned down a street, we noticed a huge American flag draped on the side of an apartment house. "Let's go over and take the goddamn thing down" suggested Lt Malone. Yes siree, we were going to show those Germans that we could be mean, if we wanted to. "Jake" stopped the jeep, and we went in, trampling our muddy feet up the clean stairs to the second floor. One look inside told us that the flag must be upstairs. I started up ahead, and as I reached the top of the stairs, I noticed a couple of cute children running across the hallway into a room, from which came the most startling thing I've seen on high-heels in Germany. She was "solid". She came forward toward me, swinging her hips gracefully, and by this time, the others coming up the stairs had stopped behind me. She came forward and stopped in front of me. "I am an American" she stated with an accent indicative of our own southern drawl and Kraut. Personally, I couldn't say much, I was so startled. Neither could the others. "Do you wish to see my passport?" she asked when she noticed that we weren't speaking. "Yes", Lt Malone answered (as much as he hated to). We walked into the living room where hung that American flag we were so brutishly going to take down. Lt Malone and Lt Bernstein looked over the passport while "Jake" and I looked over "the American". She had been born in West Virginia and had come over to this country, and married a guy who was now in the Wehrmacht. After he finished looking at the passport, Lt Malone asked her why she was displaying the American flag. She said "I thought I would get protection from the Americans if I displayed your flag". This would have turned out to be another foolish argument. Her talk would have been based on German propaganda. We started out of the room and toward the stairs. "Is there anything else I can do for you?" she asked. Lt Malone stopped as his hand reached the banister. He turned to her and said "I bet you didn't bring that out ten days ago when those SS were still around". She admitted that "they would have cut my neck off" and we went on out. Maybe that American flag still waves somewhere in the streets of Sonneberg today. If it does, okay, that's a damn good place for it!

Further on in the town, we heard some firing going on, and a German stopped us to tell us that there was rifle fire coming from the mill nearby. He couldn't speak any English and kept waving his arms around like a maniac. We didn't know whether to laugh or be scared. We rode on to the corner where a GI stood and asked him what the firing was all about. He told us that all the refugees and slave-workers in town were down looting the mills, and that some GI's were trying to stop them by firing rifle-shots over their heads. I guess the GI's were angry

because they couldn't get anywhere near the good loot. Refugees went past to their quarters dressed in oversized coats and trousers. Some of them were carrying huge chunks of meat, and still others sported new paratroop boots. We took this all in with a grin, but also wished that we could have been in on some of the loot.

Across the street from a bank, we discovered a rather-nice looking building. We drove in and were met at the door by a middle-aged woman, with whom Lt Bernstein tried to speak German. He was finding out how many people were in the house, and how long it would take them to get out, so that our company could take over the place. It was a beautiful home, with huge chandeliers, large paintings, expensive furnishings, draped beds which looked like something out of Mt Vernon, and many, many rooms, each one a comfortable little billet for our troops. Furthermore, there were good wines and liquors, including a touch of champagne. The lady tried to explain that her grandfather was a consul to the British government, as she showed us the house and prepared to move out. One old lady went past carrying about three suitcases. How she managed them beats the dickens out of me. She stopped to catch a breath, and turned to me and said, "I have a son in New York. I'd like to see my son some day soon" and tears started streaming down her cheeks. I started feeling sorry for her, and would have helped her with her suitcases, hadn't it been for the fact that I suddenly thought "German propaganda"..... "No Fraternization"..... "No Sympathy for the German Old"..... My glance wandered out the window to the adjacent building which was almost as large as the one I was in. A German soldier, probably something from the Volkssturm, (he was so old), sneaked into a doorway. I called the lady over and asked her what that was, and further emphasized the fact that she'd have to explain what a German was doing in the next building. She informed us that that was a hospital over there and that the Kraut was a mental case. Okay.

The company came in soon, and the men made themselves comfortably at home in this beautiful mansion. Major Henry Anderson, our battalion's Executive Officer dropped in to pay us a visit. Of course, it wasn't only a social call. Hell, no. There were a few roadblocks to be cleared down the road. The 1st Platoon was dispatched to work on their extrication. This was on the road between Sonneberg and Steinach, not the main road, but a secondary winding road through the woods. With the "drafting" of near-by civilian labor and horses, the roadblocks were taken out quickly.

As far as the roadblocks on the main highway were concerned, we went to the local burgomeister and asked him to put some civilians on them. The roadblocks had been taken out, but not totally; there was only room enough for one-way traffic. Incidently, we didn't "ask" him to put civilians on. We "ordered" him to! We met Gen Hartness and his aide, formerly of our company, Lt Borell, while on our way back to Sonneberg.

On a little recon with Capt Spencer, we covered the towns of Steinheid, Neumannsgrund, Rauenstein, and Hüttensteinach.

All the bridges across the next river were blown by the retreating Germans, and this was holding up our task forces. At a town near the river, Neukenroth, we remained that night after having gone through Steinbach, Föritz, Buch, Burggrub, and Stockheim. Just after dawn the next morning, the 3rd Platoon went through in their task force. We then figured that the bridges must have been put in by then, even though we didn't have anything to do with it. Supporting engineers were still putting the finishing touches on the fixed bridge when we went over, and rolled along through Hasslach, Gundelsdorf, Knellensdorf, Rappen, Heimtreiber, Unter-Rodach, Ober-Rodach, to Zeyern where we were again held up by another blown bridge. The 1st Platoon was immediately placed in operation, clearing a by-pass by fording the river to the left and reconverting a railroad bridge, which had remained intact, into a traffic-bridge. Lumber was obtained near-by, and by the time the bridge was completed and the approaches finished by the "cat" operated by T/5 Charles Blankenburg and guided by T/4 Anthony Rizzuto, traffic was being detoured in still another direction and over a treadway bridge which had been put in over our ford by supporting engineers.

Since we had been held up here at Zeyern most of the day, our advanced elements were dogtailing it ahead via the by-passes and detours. We wonder if that damn railroad bridge we reconverted was ever used . .

Just before dark that night, we started ahead to catch up with regimental and other parts of the company which had gone on through. We met them at Presseck, having come through Wallenfels and Elbersreuth. But, regimental hadn't as yet stopped moving. When we arrived in Presseck they were preparing to leave.

High-ranking German officers were captured here and they all stood packed into a 3/4-ton truck in the square in Presseck. We noticed a full Colonel, a Major, and a Captain among them, and some GI was worried, mind you, because he didn't know what to do with the 34 German "Wacs" he had accummulated up the street!

We left Presseck and headed eastward toward Grafengehaig, passing through Heinersreuth, Wahl, Enchenreuth, Buchenreuth, Eppenreuth in the darkness. Tired after a busy day of work in Zeyern and the long ride, we grabbed our bedrolls and hit the hay early. The company CP was located in a bakery directly across the alley from our house. A rumor stated that the 2nd Bn of the 104th was 13 miles from the Czechoslovakian border, but this was so unconfirmed that it actually wasn't true at all!

Up ahead, there was a little resistance in the town of Münchberg. While waiting for orders to move on, we led S Sgt Kermit Kalmer of the Motor Pool, who was accompanied by Sgt William Moeser and another mechanic, over to the town of Helmbrechts, where a Kraut motor pool had been captured intact. It looked more like a "grave-yard". There were many American jeeps in the yard and we brought four of

them back to the company with us. They were later put into action, and proved to be worth their weight in gold.

Moving through Hohenreuth, Grünlas, Hohenberg, Durkersreuth, Wüstenselbitz, Unter-Weissenbach, Ahornis, we arrived in a little village on the outskirts of Münchberg called Poppenreuth. This is where the company set up for the next three days. Between Poppenreuth and Münchberg, which was only a stone's throw away, ran the Berlin-Munich superhighway, which our troops had successfully cut.

The 3rd Platoon was working in Münchberg that afternoon. We went into the town and found them over on the north side of town, removing a roadblock which had been tactfully constructed under a blown railroad overpass. Steel girders hung low over the road restricting passage only to jeeps, since there wasn't sufficient clearance for trucks. In the town itself, prisoners were still being rounded up and SS troops were quite noticeable in the ranks of PW's. The town wasn't too badly damaged, but there were evident signs of some resistance. There was a hospital for wounded Wehrmacht personnel which was then being guarded by American dough-boys. The streets were cluttered with countless refugees, among them Poles, French, and Russians. Again, we noticed the looting that these civilians were doing. One lady dressed in rags went past with a huge pig's leg on her back. Interrogation was also going on and we watched an MG non-com as he roughly handled the civilians. The Hotel Astor sat at the corner of the main street in town. This was being used as a temporary regimental headquarters. Downstairs in the hotel, the military were carrying on, while from the upstairs windows hung lovely "fräuleins", peering down at the street below, where tanks and TD's loaded with infantry passed. We went into the hotel and looked over the in-coming cameras, binoculars, and pistols. There was a telephone booth in the lobby and I picked up the phone and rang. Someone answered, which kinda stumped me because I figured that our artillery had knocked out telephonic communication. I handed the phone to "Jake" and he shouted "Achtung! Achtung! Achtung!" into it and hung up.

Above, engineers using a "power-saw", which we discovered to be the thing for removing abatis's and roadblocks quickly in the rapid advance.

The 3rd Platoon "shacked up" in Münchberg that night and returned to the company the next day with a wonderful supply of liquor. They used up the liquor for a birthday party in honor of T/5 Joseph Staffieri, truck driver in the 3rd Platoon. The party started with a supper of fresh chicken, and wine, as well as chicken soup, deliciously cooked by Pfc Sam Provo. I joined the party later on in the night. It was a real celebration. Everyone wanted a dance with Pfc Norbert Loos of Bloomfield, New Jersey, at his insistance, of course. There wasn't much space in the little kitchen where all the excitement was going on. The radio played on unnoticed, and bottle after bottle was devoured with great gusto. I managed to sneak a drink now and then, or they were practically slammed at me before I could even finish the first glass. One of the fellows sitting next to me suddenly keeled over off the chair and fell to the floor. I thought he had had a heart attack, but it was only the liquor. The flow of pedestrian traffic to the latrine kept on all through the night. Some of the participants carried the party out onto the lawns in front of the house, where I found someone on his hands and knees yelling "Marcone! Marcone! Marcone!" I tripped the light fantastic over to the 1st Platoon's house and went to sleep . . . .

The 3rd Platoon moved out just after daybreak the next morning!!!!!!

How this terrific task was accomplished without the loss of a man is something in itself. On my way to breakfast the next morning, I noticed that the 3rd Platoon house had been emptied and the trucks had left the area. All those "big heads" advancing into action! Christmas!

Our jeep had to be washed. "Jake" and I took all the equipment and personal belongings out of the jeep and started down to the river. I was walking along the opposite edge and "Jake" was driving along on the other side, when he suddenly went into a stream, and remained stuck there until I went up to get a 2 1/2-ton truck at company. I tried to drive it down to help "Jake" get out of the ditch. The 2 1/2-ton truck slushed into the mud and sank almost clear to the hood! Back to the company went I to get the 6-ton down to the two vehicles in the mud. The vehicles were pulled out, and we never did wash the jeep!

The 2nd Platoon was over in the town of Mussen in support of the 2nd Bn. The 1st Platoon seemed to be attached to the company and regiment. At least we traveled with them now, and sooner or later we expected to be put in support of the 1st Bn.

On the 7th of April we left Poppenreuth and traveled through Münchberg, Mussen, Käshütte, Mechlenreuth, Stockenreuth, to the town of Sparneck, where we set up for the night. The 3rd Platoon was over in the town of Benk in support of the Task Force Dellert which was being held up before the town of Kirchenlamitz. Artillery had been asked to knock down the town, which they did efficiently. We followed Capt Spencer into Kirchenlamitz the next morning, the company remaining in Sparneck. On the road between Benk and Kirchenlamitz, we saw many long abatis's which the 3rd Platoon must have removed. On the outskirts of the town we noticed cut-up, dead Krauts where they had fallen. The

buildings in the town were well-blasted and demolished. Civilians swept the broken glass and debris away from their front doors. Some of them weren't so fortunate. These started their march out of the town to there friends, pulling with them a cartfull of their remaining belongings, weeping as they hurried along, leaving behind them their ruined homes. We were not in Germany on a sight-seeing tour. Adolph asked us over and we wanted him to know we had arrived.....

While in Kirchenlamitz, we met Lt Gannon who appeared to be quite cccupied. There must have been plenty of engineer work to be done in that vicinity because I heard him mention that the A&P Platoon had chipped in. A couple of barrages of "screaming meemies" came in while we were there, something we hadn't heard in a long time. And on our way out of town, we saw a shell-crater in the road which wasn't there when we went in! We passed through Weissdorf on our way back to Sparneck, where the company was prepared to move on to the town of Weissenstadt, where we found the 2nd Platoon. They, too, had met a little resistance on the way into this town. An M-4 Sheridan tank was knocked out at the entrance into town. Someone told us that a 15-year-old Nazi youth had done it. "The Stars and Stripes" mentioned the fact that out armor was encountering members of the Nazi youth who sweated and shivered while firing a rifle or Panzerfaust. One sniper had been picked up in this vicinity.... age, 11. The tankers stated that these kids were a mere nuisance to our advancing forces.

Picking out houses for the company in Weissenstadt was fun because we found this Yugoslav soldier who had been a prisoner and forced-laborer for five years in the town. He used his own techniques in throwing out the civilians. Inexplicable it is to describe his method, it was so funny. He'd bow very low while speaking to the Germans in order to emphasize what he was saying. The women would cry, and he'd bow even lower and speak all the louder. The people left, too.

That afternoon, the 2nd Squad of the 1st Platoon was called out to remove a roadblock after the infantry had cleared the Krauts away from it. We moved out to the 3rd Bn OP in the last house on the outskirts of Weissenstadt. On the road toward Franken which ran through a patch of woods where the roadblock was situated, we could see a burning half-track through our fieldglasses. It and a jeep had been knocked out by the Krauts and two other jeeps had been ambushed in that vicinity. As soon as the roadblock was reported clear, we drove past the burning half-track to it. Our jeep windshield wasn't too good, so "Jake" and I came back to the knocked-out jeep and removed its windshield. We had to work fast because there was live ammunition in the half-track which kept exploding while it burned. From then on, our jeep was known as "Sally", 'cause that's the name that was printed on there. The roadblock was taken out using the truck's winch and hand-saws; then we returned back to company and chow.

We were in the CP that night putting some new maps together when suddenly we heard the guard outside yelling "Fire! Fire! In the kitchen

truck!" and the lights went out. We scrambled through the darkness out into the street, and found some men working with fire-extinguishers on the blaze. It was put out after a while, as directed by 1st Sgt Anthony McGinty. "Hutch" (Pfc Travis Hutchison of Tennessee) was burned by the explosion of the stove, and Sgt McGinty suffered minor burns. "Hutch" was evacuated, and returned to the company after the end of the war.

The next morning, the 1st Platoon was attached to Task Force Gladding, lead by Lt Col Gladding, CO of the 1st Bn. His men called him "Commando" Gladding. He held the DSC for gallantry in action in Alsace-Lorraine. The task force formed early in the morning and started out through Birk, Meierhof, Vordorf, Leupoldsdorf, to Tröstau, where we stopped until further orders arrived. On the road up ahead between Tröstau and Grötschenreuth, a roadblock had been discovered by men of Baker Co, 1st Bn. The engineers were dispatched immediately. We started to take it out the old way, but it so happened that Sgt Daimler's squad of the 2nd Platoon arrived on the scene in a 2nd Bn Task Force which was passing through. Sgt Daimler suggested that we use the powersaw. The jeep was sent back, and we must admit that the power-saw became "it" for removing our roadblocks from then on out... even if the 3rd Platoon doesn't think so!

Passing through Wurmloh and Mühlbühl, our convoy was held up. While we sat there, 5 Krauts, 3 SS men, came walking up to our rear vehicle with their hands in the air. Unperturbed since this was becoming a habit, we went on munching K-rations. We went on through Grünlas, Zeckenberg, across the fields to Schwarzenreuth, before we took a short break at Mengersreuth, long enough to remove a roadblock, which had a booby-trapped stick grenade on it, and which Lt Malone removed with care.

We joined the task force, the jeep close to the leading tanks and the rest of the trucks following at the rear of the convoy. We went on through Riglasreuth, Lochau, Neuhof, and Pfaben, before we were again stopped by a little opposition between Grötschenreuth and the larger town of Erbendorf, our objective for the day. It seems as though Col Gladding had overrun a sedan in which were 6 SS troopers. The SSers jumped out of the vehicle and the Colonel pinned them down with his machine gun. Some of them got up and took off for a patch of woods. We saw all this from a "ringside seat" since we were following close. The infantry jumped off the tanks and the 90's opened up on the woods. The SSers came running out the other side of the woods and started across the fields. Direct 90 mm fire killed all four, and wounded a French slave who was working out on the field.

The 1st Bn advanced into Erbendorf, where more Jerries were rounded up, and we set up for the night. Capt Spencer visited us that night and told us that company was west of Erbendorf in the town of Schönreuth. The 1st Platoon settled down for the night in a comfortable restaurant-boardinghouse in Erbendorf.

The next morning, we started out again through the smallest and almost impassable roads and trails in thick woods. An artillery liaison L-4 swooped down while we were in the woods and dropped a message asking if we'd want to follow him out of the woods. Paying no attention to it, we went on following the lead jeep, that of Col Gladding's. Turn left. Turn right. Through brush. Over narrow roads. Cross here. And we came out about 10 miles west of our objective and way out of our zone. We rode through the towns of Döllnitz, Altendorf, Eichelberg, Niedersdorf, and Dorthammerles, to our objective for the day, Parkstein, a town at the top of a hill. It was a hill setting out there all by itself. The peak of the hill was covered with buildings which constituted Parkstein. We were to wait here until the 11th Armored pulled through us on the way to Weiden.

We had been assigned to Task Force Gladding when our route of advance had been turned south along the border of Czechoslovakia. After all the talk on how we were to resume fraternization in Czech, our route turned south toward the Danube, away from Czech!

The 11th Armored kept going through for hour after hour and it rained heavily all the while. We made a trip back to company to pick up mail. Company was staying in Diessfurt that night. On our way back, we got stuck in the mud just before we started up the hill into Parkstein. It was pouring out, and we went up into town, catching a ride in an ammo truck, to get some help. By the time we had gathered a few men, "Jake" came driving into the area. Someone had helped him out of the mudhole.

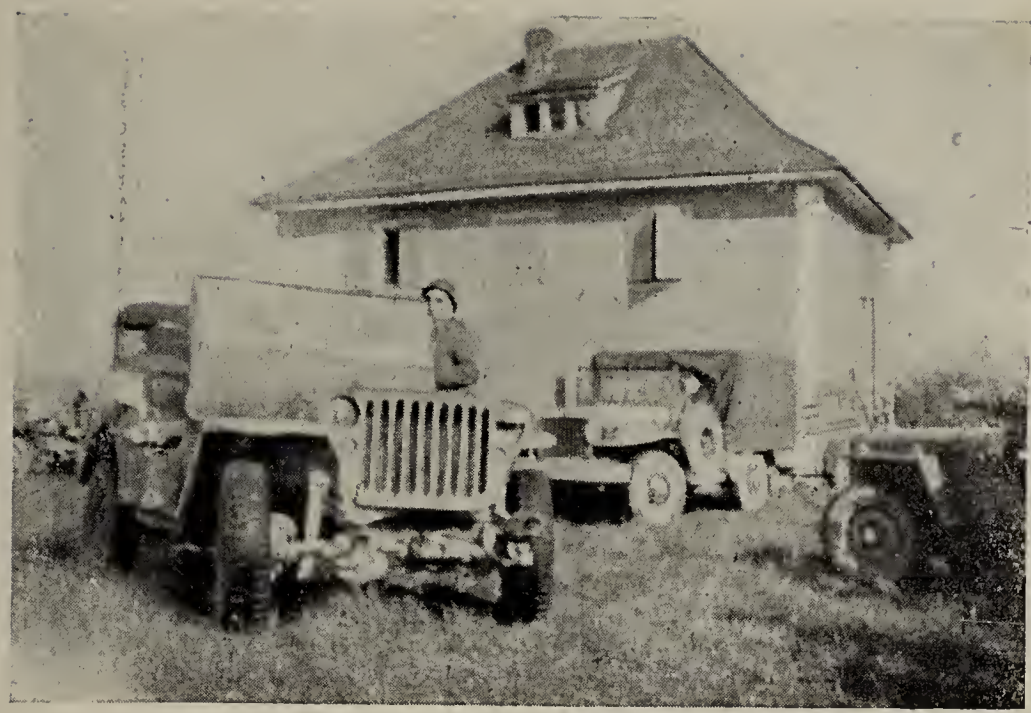
We left for Weiden the next morning, and got stuck in the mud as we crossed the railroad tracks in the vicinity of Weiden, which the 11th Armored was attacking. Up ahead of us, Col Gladding had run into some resistance west of Weiden in the town of Neunkirchen. We worked on taking the vehicles out of the mud, then caught up with the leading elements again in the town of Neunkirchen where the Colonel and his men had gathered together about 150 prisoners including one with one leg and a girl-medic! They had been defending the town and looked like good examples of what Hitler was drafting those days. The town between us and Weiden was burning, and while we passed trough it, Frauenricht, there was a Kraut flopped dead in a small push-cart on the side of the road. Krauts were surrendering all the way into Weiden.

The 11th Armored was moving through Weiden when we went into the city. They held priority on the roads, but someone managed to sneak us through to a roadblock in Ermersricht where we found civilians already working on it.

The platoon assembled in Weiden and remained there that night. The next morning the task force set off again passing through Etzenricht, Rothenstadt, Pirk, Pischeldorf, Unter-Wildenau, Luhe, where 11th Armored destruction was evident, Diebrunn, Ober-Köblitz, and Wernberg, where we turned left on a move over to the 11th Armored's left flank. We went on over a cobble-stone road to Deindorf and Woppenhof,

and every time we stopped, we'd build us a fire. Sometimes, we'd just about have the fire started when we'd pull out again. At Woppenhof, we turned south over back roads through Losau, Söllitz, Köttlitz, down a steep hill to the town at the bottom of the valley called Trausnitz. The leading elements were rounding up members of the Nazi youth who were in the town. From Trausnitz, we continued our advance on through Fuchsendorf, Ramsendorf, Trefnitz, Weidenthal, Pischdorf, Rottendorf, to Nied.-Murach, where 16,000, a whole division, of Hungarian troops had been captured by the 11 Armored and were being rounded up here in this town. We made our way slowly past the long lines of Hungarians, and headed north to the vicinity of Teunz, where we hit a wide super-highway. We turned south and went as far as Hof Oberviechtach, before turning off past Niesass to Dieterskirchen, where we remained for two nights, for some unknown reason.

We left Dieterskirchen and returned to the super-highway on the 23rd of April, heading south. We traveled past numerous released English prisoners of war who waved us on and asked for an American cigarette, or anything which we might have had to eat. At Rötz, we turned east through Happassenreid and were stopped at a road junction just before the town of Neunkirchen-Balbini. The 11th Armored was again moving through. Over on the other road ,which ran into the one that we were now on, there was a little excitement. An SS guard from a local PW camp had tried to disguise himself as a Russian slave, attempting an escape with the Russians when they were freed. The Russians awaited the Americans, and when they did come, they clubbed the SS man to death. We arrived there just a couple of minutes after this had happened and Russians were still passing by. Every time a Russian would come up to this dying SSer's body, he'd either kick him or spit on him, or both! We went over to look, and found the club that they had beat him to death with. He lay there kicking like a chicken before it dies. Blood was flowing from his head, and still the Russians kicked and spitted. Our task force was let through and we continued. We now knew that our rush was in the direction of Roding, where our 26th Reconn Troops had captured a bridge intact across the River Regen the night before. We rode on through Mappach, Neubäu, Kreith, and Mitterdorf, before we entered Roding. The guards at the bridge seemed to sigh with relief as we rode over the long bridge into the town. The whole civilian population seemed to be out to greet us. The streets were cluttered with refugees as usual, and American guards stood beside some of our light tanks. There was talk of staying there that night, and after we had picked out a suitable house, regimental started to move in, and the 1st Bn moved forward. Company came in and took over the houses we had picked out. We went ahead with the



Company CP in Roding, Germany . . .
(by T/5 Phillip La Placa)

task force to Michsneukirchen, and stopped. At the corner, there stood two Englishmen and their Nazi guard who was captured without the firing of a shot. Col Gladding questioned them, and they told him that there were more Englishmen over in the towns of Schrötting and Thiermietnach. They also told us that there were German guards with these prisoners. "Let's go get 'em!" said the Colonel, and before we knew it, we were on the way to free these prisoners riding at the head of the column and ahead of the tanks themselves! We came slowly out of the woods and started toward the buildings of the first town. Then, the Englishmen began noticing our column, and they came running down the road, over the fields, in great swarms. They stopped the column, jumped all over the vehicles, tried out our weapons, and all they kept saying was "You damn Yankees, you!". We gave them cigarettes, and they smoked to their hearts' content. They led us up to the farmhouse where the German guards were preparing to hand over their weapons and ammunition. Everyone was happy, even the Wehrmacht guards who hugged the Englishmen in appreciation! From here we went on to the next town, where countless others were also freed. I walked into a house, and the Kraut was saying good-bye to his wife. He came over and handed me his pistol and belt. Then he wanted to find out to which PW camp he would be sent, so his wife would know! All the excitement started to die down, and we loaded on the prisoners (Krauts) and brought them back into Michsneukirchen with us, where we spent the night. Two of the Englishmen we freed managed to walk back to town where we were staying that night. One was "Bill" and the other "Mac", a sergeant. They remained with us until the cessation of hostilities in the ETO, traveling with the 1st Platoon's 3rd Squad, who were short of men, anyway, working the Krauts we used to put to work on roadblocks, and

enjoying every bit of it. We lent them our clothing, and they picked up blankets here and there. Bill and Mac both had a distinctive English accent and we got a kick out of way they spoke.

25 April 45:

Today we covered the following towns: Regelsmais, Zinzenzell, Schönstein, Emmersdorf, Herrnfehlburg, Dammersdorf, Irschenbach, Prunstfehlbg, Weingarten, and Elisabethzell.

We remained in Elisabethzell that night in a restaurant-boardinghouse. The company was over in Konzell.

26 April 45:

Neukirchen, where the 3rd Platoon had stayed the night before, Taussersdorf, Mühlbach, Hilm, Rettenbach, Bernreid, Höslbach, Innenstetten, Medernberg, Weibing, Hofstetten, Grün-Kalteck, Achslach, Gotteszell, and Köckersreid were covered today.

We were also quite a busy platoon of engineers. At about this time, Nazi youngsters were knocking large trees down across the roads and constructing long abatis's. Some of these were by-passed and some held up the task force until the engineers had come forward to clear the trees while the infantry advanced ahead on foot. In the woods between Rettenbach and Bernreid, a Kraut General and his whole staff, complete with vehicles, surrendered to our task force.

North of Weibing, the advance was temporarily held up by a long abatis and a wide crater. In the meantime, a detour was discovered over Class F roads in the hilly woods on our right. The convoys were led up there and tank after tank got stuck in the soft shoulders. While our two Englishmen, Bill and Mac, worked the Kraut prisoners on the roadblock and crater, assisted by the 3rd Squad of the 1st Platoon, the rest of the platoon helped dig the stuck tanks out of their prediction. It wasn't until dusk that we were able to assemble most of the task force up in the town of Achslach. We looked down to the Danube from the town of Grün-Kalteck. And while so doing, we noticed that the 3rd Bn was having a little fight over in the town of Egg, a few miles south of our position. Fires were burning in the town, and artillery and small-arms fire could be observed from where we stood "high on a windy hill". We left Achslach and went on to the town of Köckersreid where we spent the night.

Task Force Gladding of about ten-vehicle strength had been going all day and communication with him had been lost.

We weren't touching many large cities at all. Our job consisted of mopping-up operations in the by-passed areas. That's why bad seccondary roads had to be resorted to, in which case tanks and heavy equipment would become stopped in soft ground and muddy roads.

Company Headquarters stayed in the town of Bernreid this night, and the 3rd Platoon was roaming around somewhere in the vicinity of Egg.

In Egg, Germany, the 3rd Platoon was ordered to burn this house, after a sniper didn't come out. Pfc Americo Sciarrabba started this blaze with an incendiary grenade...

27 April 45:

Ruhmansfelden, Patersdorf, Regen, Farnbach, Bischofsmais, St Hermain, Pitzmais, Rusel, and Seiboldsried were covered today.

We left Köckersreid early the next morning to the town where Task Force Gladding had stopped the night before, St Hermain. From Köckersreid, we went north on a very good highway, then east to Regen, where we again encountered the 11th Armored. The Krauts had blasted a long bridge, which had successfully been by-passed by the 11th Armored. From Regen, we headed south again to St Hermain, where we took a break for the rest of the morning. Taking off again about noon, we reached a main north-south highway in the vicinity of Pitzmais. The convoy stopped and they called back for engineers to go forward and remove a long road-block. And "long" it was. 260 yards of trees and logs felled across the road! And the local members of the Nazi Youth

Movement had done that during the night, because the day before, our advance patrol had passed over that same section of the highway, and it had been clear! The youths were rounded up and put to work on helping us remove the roadblock. It took us about three hours to complete the job, and by that time, our town in which to stay that night had been picked. Seiboldsreid was located out in the middle of nowhere, on a plain. It was about 2 or 3 miles off the main highway. I remember this day by the little battle we had over on the other side of that long roadblock. Our infantry went on ahead advancing toward some of the buildings in Rusel where lurked a molesting sniper. Small-arms fire was prevolent, and two civilian women who were walking down the street as if nothing was going on, got caught in the middle of it. I could see them crouched over in a ditch while bullets whizzed past.

Members of the 2nd Platoon "somewhere in Germany". Left to right, Cohen, Dobbs, Minimi, Hurley, Sochinski, unknown infantryman, Lanzarone, and Champigny . . .

28 April 45:

Durchfirth, Ranzing, Lalling, Rohrstetten, Gneisting, Freindorf, Schöfweg, Daxstein, Zenting, Entschenreuth.

Schöfweg: as we rode into the town, we were welcomed by flower-throwing civilians, and one bunch of flowers hit Colonel Gladding square in the face!

Zenting: will I ever forget that town! We left Schöfweg, and traveled slowly behind the foot-troop infantry of Able and Baker Company's. As we got further on into the the woods, we decided to go ahead with another jeep of Able Company into the town of Zenting to check for roadblocks. An infantry lieutenant stuck a light 30-calibre machine gun

on my lap, which Lt Malone put in the front seat with him after we got going. Some civilian, who had come over from Brooklyn in '39, told us that the civilians in town had started taking out the roadblocks already, and before we got down there they were already finished. However, a lady ran up excited and told us that there were 30 SS troops coming back into the town. Honestly, it isn't an engineer's job to defend a town until the infantry arrived, but I guess the infantry lieutenant who was with us had a different idea. "Let's go get 'em!" he said. "Brooklyn", the civilian we had picked up, wanted to come along, too. There we were six GI's and one civilian going out to tackle thirty SS men! I didn't exactly feel like it, but I was excited as to be able to have such an opportunity that we'd been looking for all along. As we rode on through Zenting to the other side of town, the civilians crowded the streets and motioned the direction we should take at every corner. The last civilian slowed us down, and pointed out the enemy's position on the hill up ahead. The infantry lieutenant drove his jeep right out in the open field. We brought ours up beside his. "Jake" grabbed my M-1, and I opened up with the "grease-gun", firing one clip. Lt Malone was still trying to get the light machine-gun to work. It appeared to be jammed. The other jeep's 50-calibre was blasting away. I grabbed Lt Malone's carbine and fired right through the muzzle cover and all, then grabbed the machine gun. The SSers didn't know which way to run. The infantry lieutenant came up and told us to move back to some defilade. I lay on my stomach, firing the machine gun, and "Brooklyn" was standing there yelling "Kill the sons-of-bitches!". "Jake", after finding that all the rifle fired was one round, was helping me cock the machine-gun which was jamming too damn often. Through the front sight, I could see the Krauts trying to keep low as they ran. We fired as much as possible, and got them well on the way out of town .... We went back to meet the on-coming infantry. It sure was an exciting experience. Something that I don't want to forget mentioning is this little comical characteristic of ours. Every time we got anywhere where there was some shooting going on, "Jake", **little** "Jake", would grab my **big** M-1. And me, as **long as** I am, would grab his **small** "grease gun" .... After we had met the infantry, we came back into town. I went into a restaurant with "Jake", looking for a drink of beer. We opened the door, and walked in. There sat a Kraut drinking beer, just as though there weren't a war going on. After interrogation, it was discovered that he was caught while home in Zenting on furlough! We didn't stay in Zenting that night. We went on to Entschenreuth and stayed there. Company stayed at Zenting. Our reconnaisance patrols had found out about some resistance up ahead in the vicinity of Tittling. We waited until morning to take off ....

Pfc Nicholas Caso of the 1st Platoon sporting a captured enemy garrison hat "some-where in Germany".

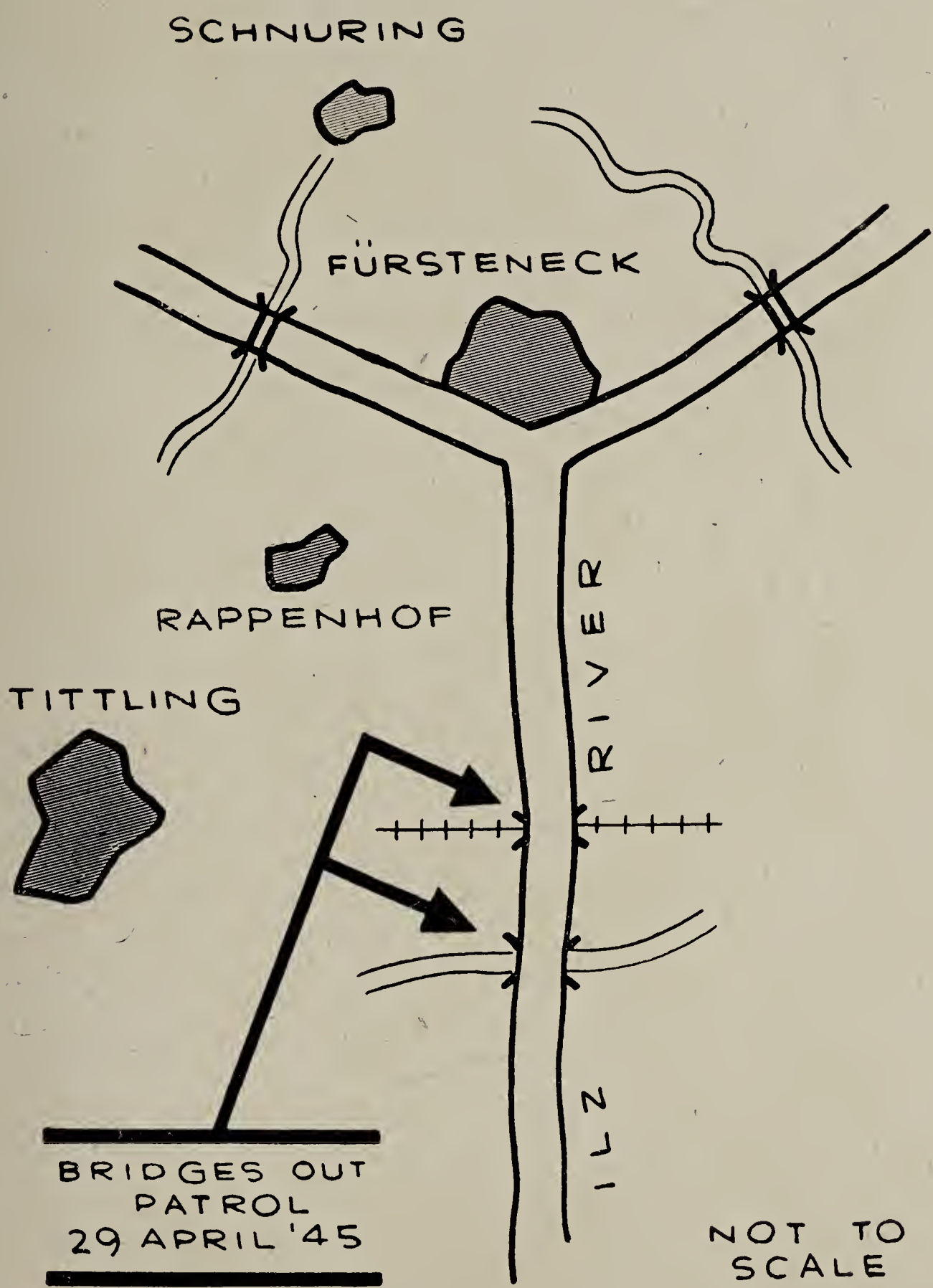
29 April 45:

Gingharting, Traxenberg, Tittling . . . . .

. . . . . Only three towns, but another exciting day, nevertheless. When we came into Traxenberg, our forward elements noticed something like an enemy outpost on a huge rock at the top of a hill, in the general direction of Tittling. One round from a 90 mm. knocked the top of the rock and man completely out of creation! We went on into Tittling, our jeep following with the artillery observer close behind the few leading tanks. The task force was moving comparatively slow this morning. Just on the outskirts of Tittling, the fireworks started. Wow, one'd think we were back in Alsace-Lorraine or Luxembourg! There were burp-guns, machine-guns, rifles, 75's, 90's, and many more. The infantry jumped off the tanks and went into position. The tanks and TD's moved up into "battle formation". Vehicles pulled over to the side of the roads. As nosey as we were by then, "Jake" grabbed the old M-1, and I, the "grease gun". We walked up ahead to where we could see what was going on. Our machine-guns were firing past a tank, whose track had slipped off, into a patch of woods. Our infantry, Charlie Company of the 104th, was attacking the houses in the vicinity. Burpguns could be heard being fired from one of the buildings. The artillery observer came forward and began directing fire into Tittling up ahead, and which we could see by now. "Jake" and I ducked behind a TD, using it as defilade and protection in case someone would start firing at us. The TD was in position. Suddenly someone called the TD's attention to a target and it moved out, leaving us with no protection, out in the open! Did we make for the nearest ditch! Our troops advanced into Tittling after the artillery had blasted it pretty well. An SS trooper was caught in the midst of changing honest-to-goodness GI clothing into his SS uniform. He had GI paratroop boots, OD's, a steel helmet, and everything. Our troops stripped him down to his underwear and started knocking hell out of him with their fists. When we saw him, he was sitting on the top of a jeep hood, his face bleeding and his eyes swollen beyond recognition. A photographer was snapping a picture of him. I sometimes wonder whether or not he ever got back to the rear . . . .

We went into Tittling, past the flaming homes, whose walls would crash to the ground. We arrived there right after the infantry, and Capt Spencer came in soon thereafter. Our platoon and company was still on the way in. The reconnaissance patrol was getting ready to leave. They were going ahead to check on two bridges over the Ilz River, the only bridges in our area of advance. They had requested that an engineer go along with the patrol. Grabbing a couple of hand grenades, a few extra clips of ammunition, and a rope (to measure the gap with, if the bridge was blown), I went along with them. The task force and our platoon settled down in Tittling until we got back. The patrol would attempt to take the bridges intact. One was a railroad bridge and the other a highway bridge, but only about 500 yards apart. We drove to

the last town before the river. The vehicles couldn't go on any further. What a funny feeling it was to go ahead like that. The civilians in the little towns we went through were so happy, they cried, actually bawled their hearts out. Each town asked us to stay there that night so that the SS wouldn't come back. In one town, a young lady held her baby close to her and said to me: "Hitler no good. He take babies away." And she was crying. We went on through Trasfelden, Eppendorf, Kafering, Spitzendorf, to Asenbaum, where the vehicles had to stay. A patrol, consisting of a BAR-man, 4 infantry men, and myself, went forward toward the vicinity of the bridges. As we came over the last hill before the river, we heard a terrific explosion a few hundred yards ahead, and the huge cloud of smoke and dust rising; also pieces of metal, which looked like bridge-girders, flying through the air. I was walking beside the patrol leader then, and told him that it would be advisable if we'd try to make it by running, because there was still another bridge. "Let's go!" he yelled, and we all started running towards the river. We had just started running when there was a second similar explosion. Too late! We walked cautiously through the dynamite-smelling area and smoke of the blast toward the vicinity of the bridges. On the side of a hill overlooking the river, we stopped in the woods, which consisted mostly of brush with a few large trees. Things around the now-blown bridges seemed too quiet for comfort. The patrol leader climbed a tree, saw that the two bridges were blown, and came back down. "They're blown" he said. Somehow or other, I knew that that was not all I was supposed to find out. "Coming down with me to measure the gap?" I asked him. He emphasized that all his mission was, was to go down to the river and find out if the bridges were out. Insistent as he was, I figured that it wasn't hardly any place or time on which to argue it out. I climbed the tree, and measured an approximate width of the gap by making use of the millimeter scale on the binocular's lenses. We returned to the rest of the patrol in Asenbaum, and radioed the information back to the Bn CP in Tittling. The patrol was staying there that night, so I hitched a ride back with another patrol of Charlie Company as far as their CP in Spitzendorf. From there, I got back to Tittling and the platoon with Charlie Company's Commander. We stayed there that night, the company remaining in a town south of there by the name of Preming.


SCHNURING
FÜRSTENECK
RAPPENHOF
TITTLING
RIVER
ILN
BRIDGES OUT
PATROL
29 APRIL '45
NOT TO
SCALE

30 April 45:

Trasfelden, Rappenhof, Schnuring, Atzldorf, Laitzersdorf, Fürsteneck, Voglöd, Prag, G Tannensteig, Aussernbrünst, Deching, to the vicinity of Waldkirchen, Gaisberg, Hotzfreyung, Hemerau, Hauzenburg, Freudensee, Sickling, Krinning.

As the patrol had discovered, the bridges up ahead were blown and we had to detour out of our area over the bridge between Rappenhof and Schnuring and the one at Fürsteneck. We traveled quite a distance today, meeting no opposition, mostly due to the fact that the 11th Armored had taken care of it. We met the armor in the vicinity of G Tannensteig. They were moving south, and we were moving over onto their left flank. We went through some roadblocks which had been cleared by the 11th Armored engineers. A jeep had hit a mine in that area and it had been blown to pieces, which was spread all over the area. The company moved into Hauzenburg to remain there that night. We returned to company the next morning, and went along with Capt Spencer on a reconnaissance of roads in the vicinity of Waldkirchen. Waldkirchen was literally another demolished town. Sleet was falling then, weather we didn't expect at that time of the year . . . The 5th Inf Div was moving into Waldkirchen. The civilians stood near the remains of their homes, looking as if they didn't know what to do first, now that they had lost all they owned, animals, personal articles, clothing, food, homes. Some shoveled through the burning embers for anything they may have been able to use again. A day-or-so ago, this town had been the front line; today, it was possibly hundreds of miles behind the lines. Quite different the fighting here than it was in Alsace-Lorraine where the front line remained in the same town for days!

VICTORY!!

May 1945

1 May 45:

Ruhmannsdorf, Pfaffenreuth, Schönau, Kasberg, Wegscheid, Neider-Wegscheid.

We were relieved of assignment to the task force, and as was mentioned at the end of the last chapter, returned back to company at Hauzenburg, from where we went on the reconnaissance with Capt Spencer this morning. We moved out of Hauzenburg and traveled east to the Germany-Austria border. We billeted for the night in a small town (village) south of Wegscheid. Wegscheid was typical of 11th Armored destruction, and there must have been quite a bit of fighting before taking the town, 'cause just before the town stood five knocked-out Sherman tanks. In the town itself we saw some old familiar 88's, knocked out after direct hits from our artillery. We crossed the border into

Austria east of Wegscheid today while locating the 104th Regimental CP. Neider-Wegscheid was full of enemy-Hungarians where we stayed this night. The Hungarians had to be talked into believing that they were our enemies and weren't allowed to carry weapons or **wives** along with them. They didn't very much like the idea of being run off to PW camps, either. Pfc Morris Zaslavsky of New Jersey did the interpreting for us in German.

2 May 45:

Kramerschlag, Kollerschlag, Krobr, Stratberg, Innerödt, Weissgraben, Sarleinsbach, Altendorf.

Met the 2nd Platoon in Sarleinsbach around noon and found out that the bridges across the Mühl River up ahead were blown, and that they were holding up the advance of our troops and the 11th Armored. Why were the Krauts still doing this while we advanced clear through Germany, Berlin was being attacked by the Allies, and people back home were celebrating VE-Day?

The 2nd Platoon worked on a by—pass to these blown bridges, a long and tedious job. The 1st Platoon built a bridge after removing an abatis near its approach. These obstacles held us up in Altendorf for two days. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons were moving ahead on the other side of the river by the time we left Altendorf the next day . . . .

4 May 45:

Steinerberg, Partenreith, Neufelden, Gesst, Neider-Waldkirchen.

We went out of our zone again to cross the Mühl River in Neufelden, Austria. Traffic across the ford and Bailey Bridge at Neufelden was heavy, and we had to sneak our vehicles across one-by-one! After going all the way through this war, we finally managed to receive our 50-calibre machine gun for mounting in the jeep, which we had mounted while in Altendorf. Some of the fellows used to say "By the time you get that thing mounted, the war'll be over". How true. How true! As soon as we got to the bakery in a very small village of only a couple of clean houses north of Neider-Waldkirchen, a couple of the remnants of the Luftwaffe came flying over. As far away from anyone as we were, we could here our ack-ack open up on the planes. I jumped at the chance and let loose with the 50-calibre . . . at long last! Don't ask if I got the damn thing . . .

We remained at the bakery, where dark native bread was plentiful, that night . . . .

5 — 6 May 45:

Ultendorf, St Johann, Schietz, St Peter, Eckertstroff, Haslach, Helfenberg, Piberschlag, Weissenbach, Löfler, Guglwald, Heurassl, Friedberg.

We moved out of Neider-Waldkirchen just before dark on the 5th of May. We were heading north, quite a distance, to the town of Heurassl, so the orders first stated. Actually, we never got there that night. Our convoys became entangled with those of the 11th Armored, who had

just taken Linz, a city south of here. We turned off on roads which should never have been termed "roads" by me in this sentence. Why? Because this was far from what they were after an armored division or combat command had passed through. Believe it or not, this night (5-6 May 45) reminded us so much of our days back in the Battle of Northern France. Our platoon trucks were scattered throughout the 102nd Field Artillery convoys. The roads were so deeply rutted that vehicles would sink almost out of sight, so it seemed. And us with no rear-end on the jeep! To top it all off, it started to rain slightly as we moved along, turning into pouring rain when we were getting stuck, or pulling vehicles through. And it was real dark out! Disgust, impatience, boredom, and a desire to sleep and rest prevailed among those field-artillery boys and us. We had bumbed a tow-chain from the half-track in front of us. We couldn't possibly attempt going through those holes without four-wheel drive. We'd take off the chain, then hook it to the trailer behind the half-track whenever we'd come to these bad spots, and we'd never think there was an end to the poor condition of these roads. Axes, shovels, and few saws were used by the artillerymen to cut trees and branches, and fill in the slushy holes with, in order to get the vehicles through. One thing, it's a darn good thing that there wasn't any fighting going on in this area. Thank God for that! One time, we came up to a bad spot. The half-track stooped to let me hook on the tow-chain, Before I had hooked it to the jeep, the "track" took off across the deep rut, with me running after it, hanging onto the chain for no particular reason at all— —right through the deep rut! Better late than never, I finally let go when the "track" stopped! "Jake" had nothing else to do but try it. He came flying down the road and right into the hole! Well, with the help of about I-don't-know-how-much horse-power and man-power, we managed to get out of that. A 2½-ton truck behind drove up to push "Jake" out and knocked our rack off the back of the peep! We picked up our bedrolls and equipment, threw 'em into the jeep, placed the rack back on, just so it would hold for the time-being, hooked on to the half-track again and went on. Another hole. Worst than the one before! Something else happened and "Jake" remained stranded without a tow, and again he tried to make it. Stuck again. Up came the 2½-ton, knocking off the rack, but this time it disappeared down into the mud! Well, that's the end of the rack. Of course, the machine gun had to be dismounted and set in the back of the jeep. Some of the words we used there are unprintable. We went back to the hole after "Jake" had gone through. There was another jeep with a radio in it stuck in the same spot. Men were unsuccessfully trying to get it out. Suddenly over the radio came a message. It went something like this: "One- three to seven. One-three calling seven. The war will come to an end in the ETO at 1200 tomorrow. Over". That jeep came flying out of the hole, the driver yelling "Yippee! The war's over! Yippee! The war's over!" We went on further up the road. Another call on the radio: "Calling seven. Calling seven. Stop where you are. Bed down for the rest of the night. Further

orders in morning. Over". Thank goodness! The road up ahead was also very bad, and to top it all off, there were vehicles stuck on it. In a nearby barn "Jake" and I shoved hay over into a corner. There must have been a couple of hundred GI's in there, all drenched to the skin. And the announcement had said that the war was to be over tomorrow. What the hell did we care....

The next morning, wet clothes felt pretty chilly against our warm bodies. We trudged out across the fields to the vehicles out on the muddy road. A by-pass had been found, and we were being detoured across the fields to a better road. We hooked on to the half-track just to be sure. Somehow or other we didn't get a chance to unhook, and we rode along at quite a fast pace, hooked behind the half-track, which threw mud up, square into our faces! I never did enjoy the taste of mud, and neither did "Jake" or Lt Malone. The convoy finally stopped and we detached. Over in Helfenberg, we found the company assembling slowly, very slowly. Some of them were still trying to get out of the mud back there. We went back to check on the rest of our platoon which was busy working on the extrication of vehicles from those "traps". Noone spoke of the war's end. There were too many other things to think about. From the vicinity of Eckerstroff, we could see the Alps rising above the lower ground in the distance. The sun was out this day, and Lt Malone stopped long enough to take a picture of the Alps.

We left the assembly point at Helfenberg and moved north past what-was-yesterday's objective, Heurassl, to Freidberg.

Lt Gannon's jeep driver (3rd Platoon) was T/5 Morris Reisberg of Irvington, New Jersey and the "third man" was T/4 James P McCormick of Manhattan, New York, 50-calibre machine-gunner. They had an exciting little incident when coming into Freidberg:

"We were given the job of finding a bridge that was intact, so we took off in front of the infantry with the jeep, thinking that it was just outside of the town we were in. I told Lt Gannon 'Well, it looks like this'll be the first time we'll take a town by ourselves'. He said 'We'll soon find out'. There was 'Jimmy' full of glee, and getting his 50-calibre half-cocked. We made the last turn before Freidberg and noticed that the bridge seemed to be intact. We went on ahead and crossed the bridge, and were we surprised. About ten yards on the other side of the bridge, there were two members of the Volkstrum, armed with rifles, who were probably the guards on the bridge. I pulled up the jeep to them and asked them how many Germans were there in the town. They were more surprised than we were.... practically dumbfounded. Two Huns came up the road unarmed. I asked them how many soldiers were there and where their commander was. They pointed in the direction from where we came. I told them to jump in the jeep, which they did. We crossed the bridge again, back to where we had just come from, and the Kraut directed us up a hill. At the top, there was a group of houses. I noticed two officers, one carried a Panzerfaust, and the other armed with a burp-gun. There were three other fellows with Panzerfausts

behind them. The officer with the burp-gun seemed to hesitate a second, and before he could get a chance to think, I pulled up the jeep fast and slammed on the brakes, right in front of him. I asked him where was the commander. Arrogantly, he raised his voice and stated 'I am!' in German, of course. Here's what I told him: I told him that the town was practically surrounded by a whole regiment of troops, which wasn't true. (They were four miles behind us). I asked him to surrender, motioning with my hands in the air above my head. He told me that he had a regiment in the town, **and that he was going to fight us!** That was the moment that I realized that we were in a town that didn't have friendly troops. Lt Gannon then suggested that there be a meeting between he, the German commander, and our task force commander. Underneath it all, we were trying to figure out a way of getting to hell out of that town! Well, he asked our commander's name. We gave a fictitious name. I'm asking him to come with us, in a very polite way. He in turn answered in a gruff tone, 'Your commander will come here!'. We suggested meeting him in 30 minutes at the bridge, a suitable rendezvous point. As I turned the jeep around, I very politely asked the Germans, who were beginning to surround us, to clear the way so that I could drive through, which they did. As we started off I told them (Lt Gannon and Jimmy) that I was going to open her up and get out before they'd start firing at us, which they didn't. Well, we went down the hill and got back on the main road. We felt kinda safe now, and I was driving along at about 25 mph. We came to a roadblock and noticed a German come out of the woods. I waved at him friendly-like, and he waved back. We went on about another 25 yards and rat-tat-tat-tat-tat, someone opened up on us. All three of us saw the bullets hitting the road in front of the jeep! Well, Mac (Jimmy) said 'Speed it up'.

Lt Gannon told Mac to hold his fire, when Mac was jumping around the jeep trying to get into position to fire the 50-calibre.It was then that I noticed that the jeep was going from one side of the road to the other. Our right-front tire had been hit. We managed to ride back on it all right. As we reached our own area, we told our troops to watch out, that there were enemy troops in the next town. We pulled around to the CP. Lt Gannon went in to report. He reported that the bridge in the next town was intact and that there were enemy troops in the town of Freidberg. Meanwhile, Mac and I were fixing the flat. It was then that Mac pointed to the bullets embedded in Lt Gannon's bedroll and the holes tthrough the shovel which was directly 'neath Mac! Mac and I sweated all over again.

"What stopped that Kraut officer from firing at us and killing us, I'll never know. And so close to the end of the war, 48 hours before VE-Day!"

Tec 4 James McCormick of the 3rd Platoon, and "third man" on Platoon jeep.

As we came to the outskirts of Freidberg, we found the 3rd Platoon working on the strengthening of a long decaying bridge across the Mühl River. A tank had crashed through and fallen off the side. It was now lying partly in the river on its side. No-one was hurt since everyone was asked to get off the vehicles, all but the drivers, and walk across. Traffic was slowly being directed across the bridge now, and for the first time, a whole German medical unit, complete witth supplies, rank, vehicles, gas, and patients, went through to the rear after driving into Freidberg to surrender. There were about 40 vehicles in this convoy, a sign of the mass surrenders which were to follow. We settled down in Freidberg, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons still moving ahead with their task forces. Rumors had it that the war was actually over, but that there would be an official announcement. We stuck close by the radio and waited . . . .

7 May 45:

Freidberg.

The cessation of hostilities in the European Theatre of Operations. Could one say more?

In the beautiful little church of Freidberg, members of the company knelt at a mass of Thanksgiving . . . .

Stüblern, Czechoslovakia. Motor Pool.

We had not as yet stopped moving. On the 10th of the month, we settled down in the town of Stüblern, Czechoslovakia, our sixth country. Out of Stüblern one day, shortly after the 10th, two jeeps sped toward the Russian lines. The 3rd Platoon jeep driven by T/5 Morris Reisberg, with Lt Gannon and T/4 Edmund Lalli steadying the now-useless machine gun, and the 1st Platoon jeep, "Jake", Lt Malone, and myself, rode along past countless German troops coming in to surrender, past wandering refugees, mostly Germans fleeing from the Russians. In the town of Budweis, Czechoslovakia, we met the Russians. There wasn't any-

thing too glamorous about the meeting. It was only a symbol of so many characteristic meetings which were going on along the disintegrating fronts of the ETO, and a symbol of tremendous allied power and unity meeting after a great victory.

Members of the show, "Handfull Baker", shown in front of the theatre at Wettern, Czechoslovakia . . .
(Photo by T/5 M Reisberg)

While at Stüblern, some members of the company began writing their combat experiences into a show. The show, entitled "Handfull Baker", the company's code name throughout operations, was presented within three weeks' time at the "YD Opera House" in Prachatice, Czechoslovakia, on 16 June 45. All participants were members of the company. Commended by Brig Gen Hartness, successor to the YD Commander, Maj Gen Paul, who left for a new assignment, Lt Col Free, Bn Commander, and countless other men throughout the division it toured the various regiments of the division and the field artillery units for a week. It was a story of, by, and for Company B, but enjoyed by 1700 troops of the division. The program follows:

COMPANY B
OF THE 101st ENGINEER COMBAT BN

PRESENTS

"HANDFULL BAKER"

by

Pfc John De Rose, Jr

(from suggestions by men of the company)

NOTE: Any similarity between the characters in this production and any human being, living or dead, is purely coincidental. The show was written and produced with utter confidence in our comrades.

Stage Manager	1st Sgt Anthony McGinty
Costumes	Pfc Bert Loos
Props and Scenery	Pfc Walt Novotny, Cpl Wm McCormick
Orchestrations	YD Band
Produced and Directed	by the author.
Lights	Sgt Wm Moeser
Sound effects	Pfc's Americo Sciarabba & Frankie Voutour

PROGRAM

OPENING SELECTION — YD BAND

Announcer throughout production — S Sgt Bob Favreau

OPENING SCENE — CP IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

When: Just after the end of the war

Capt Rogers . . . . . T/4 Carl Marker

The Mail Orderly . . . . . Pfc John De Rose, Jr

ORCHESTRAL SELECTION — YD BAND

SCENE 1 ON THE NORMANDY BEACH IN SEPT' 44

When: Just off the boat

Nick . . . . . Pfc Nick Caso
Charlie . . . . . Pfc Joe Dicostanzo
Bob . . . . . Pfc Joe Tarantola
Willie . . . . . Pfc Willie De Santo
Lt Licus . . . . . Pfc Red O'Hanlon

SCENES BEFORE THE CURTAIN A SUNNY DAY IN FRANCE

French Girl . . . . . Pfc Bert Loos
Frenchman . . . . . Pfc Don Rega
GI . . . . . Cpl. Jack Ehrlich

SCENE 2 A CELLAR IN ALSACE-LORRAINE

When: Just about counter-attack time.

Capt Rogers . . . . . T/4 Carl Marker
Lt Baloney . . . . . Pfc Mush Zaslavsky
Lt Pilsen . . . . . Pfc Red O'Hanlon
Lt Flanning . . . . . Pfc Don Rega
Sgt Dunce . . . . . Pfc John DeRose, Jr
German soldier . . . . . Pfc Sam Provo
GI . . . . . Pfc Joe Dicostanzo
and Sgt Vincent Bunce & Pvt Anthony Acquaviva.

FRANKIE VOUTOUR AT THE DRUMS WITH THE BAND
THE MOTOR POOL SECTION TAKES A NIGHT OFF
T/4 Tony Rizzuto
T/5 Leo Brown & T/5 Phil LaPlaca

SCENE 3 THREE MEN IN A JEEP IN LUXEMBOURG

When: Just after the breakthrough

Thrills . . . . . Pfc Ken Mills
Pilsen . . . . . Pfc Red O'Hanlon
Driver . . . . . T/5 Moe Reisberg

OUR "VOICE" PFC JOE DI - SCALA

SCENE 4 A HOME IN GERMANY

When: Just before the Americans came

Frau . . . . . T/4 Carl Marker
Fräulein . . . . . Pfc Bert Loos
GI . . . . . T/5 Moe Reisberg

Lt Wernstein . . . . . Cpl. Jack Ehrlich
Announcer's voice . . . . . Pfc Mush Zaslavsky
Hans' voice . . . . . Pfc John DeRose, Jr

EVEN THE TRUCK DRIVERS!

Pfc Americo Sciarrabba T/5 George Van Horne

SCENE 5 A BARN IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

When: Just after the end of the war
Red . . . . . Pfc Red O'Hanlon
Johnny . . . . . Pfc John DeRose, Jr
Baldy . . . . . T/4 Ed Lalli
Polski . . . . . Pfc Bert Loos

— THE END —

Showed at the following places for troops of the division:

Prachatice	16 June 45	Engineers
Prachatice	21 June 45	Div Hq Personnel
Lenore	26 June 45	328th Inf Regt
Oberplan	28 June 45	101st Inf Regt
Krummau	29 June 45	Div Arty
Wettern	30 June 45	104th Inf Regt

Total of 13 shows.

Ushers: Molinari, Hurley, Williams, J. Brown, Lee.

Above, confiscation of German ammunition and supply by Czechoslovakian patriots in Tesovice railroad yards. The engineers were much concerned with the destruction of such . . .
Below, left to right, S Sgt Wm Robinson, Chaplain Probst, Lt Malone, Capt Spencer, with S Sgt R Favreau in front.

The company was now established in the town of Tesovice, Czechoslovakia, having arrived at this new location on the 23rd of May. "Points" were the subject now and "when are we going home?". Training schedules came into prominence and we accustomed ourselves to a rough type of "garrison life". There was equipment to put back into shape, rifles to clean, vehicles to maintain, the Pacific to sweat out. Men with over-85 points were being shipped out, to the states, or the 8th Armored Division, and new men came to us from the 8th Armored.

Among those who left us for the 8th Armored went Capt Spencer, our company commander. At a company formation, Capt Spencer spoke in a farewell tone. It was the 7th of July.

"I have been with this company since its activation. I have now received my orders to report for duty with the 8th Armored Division. I want to thank you for the wonderful cooperation you men have given me, each and every one of you. We have worked hard and well together, sometimes under adverse conditions. Lt Malone is taking over the company. I expect that you'll give him all the cooperation you gave me. Good-bye and good luck. Company, Attention! First Sergeant. Dismiss the company."

"Dismissed."

We walked away in various directions, to the schoolhouse, the barracks, the supply tent, the kitchen, the motor pool. And as we did, someone made a statement which I believe sums up the whole story. It was a simple little statement in a simple little tone, expressing the exact feeling of everyone of us at the time; said he:

"Well, there goes the company . . . ."

". . . . . But he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

THE END

APPENDIX

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Mr JOHN R REPETTI
1219 Willow Avenue
Hoboken, New Jersey

Mr and Mrs ORLANDO E RIZZO
1046 Ohio View
Ambridge, Pennsylvania

Mr and Mrs ANTHONY T RIZZUTO
10 High Street
Ellsworth, Maine

Mr JAMES R ROBERTS
Route No 2 Box 103
Forrest City, Arkansas

Mr and Mr WILLIAM R ROBINSON
52 Euclid Avenue
Haddonfield, New Jersey

Mr RAYMOND R RUFFIN
1315 East Lead Avenue
Alburquerque, New Mexico

Mr WILLIAM S RUST
Leesberg
Virginia

Mr and Mrs HILLARD E SATCHELL
Hennessey
Oklahoma

Mr and Mrs FRANCIS N SAXTON
1316 West 3rd Street
Alliance, Nebraska

Mr ELMER E SCHUSTER
3709 Schiller Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio

Mr AMERICO J SCIARRABBA
36 Lakeview Drive
Norwalk, Connecticutt

Mr and Mrs VICTOR W SCRIPPS
17 Home Place
Clifton, New Jersey

Mr JOHN L SETELA
139 15th Street
Brooklyn, New York

Mr JOHN D M SHELLEY
PO Box 105
Emigsville, York, Pennsylvania

Mr RAYMOND F SIBLEY
RFD No 2
East Montpelier, Vermont

Mr FRANK SKLENAR
1306 Orchard Street
North Braddock, Pennsylvania

Mr and Mrs ROBERT L SMITH
Route No 2
Stanfield, North Carolina

Mr MICHAEL A SOCHINSKI
200 West 60th Street
New York, New York

Mr STEPHEN S SOJKOWSKI
23 Davis Street
East Hampton, Massachusetts

Mr JOSEPH A STAFFIERI
28 New Street
Westville, New Jersey

Mr and Mrs JOHN J STANTON
198 Nagle Avenue
New York, New York

Mr and Mrs HERMAN R STASI
334 Henry Street
Orange, New Jersey

Mr KRANK A STAVOLA
568 Sackett Street
Brooklyn, New York

Mr CHARLES H STOUCH
266 High Street
Newark, New Jersey

Mr MICHAEL J TALARICO
429 61st Street
West New York, New Jersey

Mr JOSEPH TARANTOLA
37 Payson Street
New York, New York

Mr JAMES D TARANOVA
556 Line Street
Camden, New Jersey

Mr ARTHUR B THOMPSON
Williamsburg
Pennsylvania

Mr and Mrs DANIEL TORRES
1035 Hall Place
New York, New York

Mr MICHAEL A TRETOLA
1409 44th Street
North Bergen, New Jersey

Mr CHARLES G TRZASKA
1010 Washington Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

Mr LIONEL D TURCOTTE
70 North Bridge Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts

Mr GEORGE W VanHORNE
23 Chestnut Street
Tenafly, New Jersey

Mr LOTE E VanMETER
501 Howard Street
Waverley, Ohio

Mr and Mrs FRANCIS J VOUTOUR
27 Wyatt Street
Somerville, Massachusetts

Mr HUBERT A WEBB
Cache
Oklahoma

Mr and Mrs WOODROW W WHEAT
16 Elm Avenue
Glen Cove, New York

Mr and Mrs RAY C WILLIAMS
Route No 1
Walcottville, Indiana

Mr JOSEPH P YOVINO
252 6th Street
Brooklyn, New York

Mr ALEXANDER J ZALENSKI
116 North Spring Street
Bloomfield, New Jersey

Mr MORRIS ZASLAVSKY
4500 Brown Street
Union City, New Jersey

Mr GEORGE S ZAWACKI
24 Chapman Street
Bloomfield, New Jersey

* * *

Nicknames

Abrams — "Schneider"
Acquaviva — "Ack"
Ananides — "Nick the Greek"
Andrews — "Andy"
Balasco — "Nigger"
Bass — "Rebel"
Beadle — "Blue Beedle"
Belcher — "Jerry"
Berggren — "Hamberger"
Betts — "Pops"
Blankenberg — "Charlie Blank"
Bogart — "Bogie"
Bongiovanni — "Bonjie"
Bourgeois — "Bougalee"
Bowes — "Georgie"
Bradley — "Brad"
Bradshaw — "Lover"
Branco — "Shadow"
Brown, Don — "Dee Brown"
Brown, James — "Jimmy"
Brown, Leo — "Brownie"
Bunce — "Rabbit"
Buttino — "Bute"
Carrero — "Joie"
Caso — "Stringbean"
Chalk — "Crayon"
Champigny — "Champ"
Chiurazzi — "Hercules"

Choate — "Choate"
Ciccone — "Nigger"
Cimarosse — "Sim"
Cohen — "Murphy"
Corey — "Wally"
Considine — "Mike"
Consetino — "Joe"
Cosper — "Casper"
Cox — "Elmer"
Cross — "Cross"
Daimler — "Dame"
Deal — "Deal"
DelRosso — "Joâo"
"Grease-ball"
DePaul — "Legs"
DeRose — "Johnny"
DeSanto — "Willie",
"Scamp"
Dicostanzo — "Deek"
Dimmick — "Tom"
"Dim"
DiScala — "Joe"
Dittman — "Ditt"
Dobbs — "Dobbs"
Dolley — "Dolley"
Domorski — "Al"
Egolf — "Pop"
Ehrlich — "Jack"
Ellison — "Artie"
Emig — "Emig"
Favreau — "Whip"
Ferris — "Dick"
Franz — "Whitey"
Galasti — "Fish"
Gendrin — "Gendie"
Genaro — "Genaro"
Gordnick — "Lefty"

Graziano — "Nose"
Griffin — "Griff"
Haase — "Bob"
Harris — "Joe"
Havard — "Leevy"
Heber — "Larry"
Heinrich — "Dick"
Herman — "Joe"
Hill — "Hill"
Hillman — "Hillman"
Hobson — "Hops"
Holmes — "Russ".
Hurley — "Bill"
Hutchison — "Hutch"
Johnson — "John"
Kalmer — "Schnout"
Kelczewski — "Kelly"
Kern — "John"
Kiser — "Joe"
Knight — "Donald Duck"
Kraus — "Red"
"Blues in the Night"
Krysinski — "Criss"
Labrade — "Wally"
Lalli — "Nose"
Lanzarone — "Leo"
"Lanz"
LaPlaca — "Phil"
Lee — "Rebel"
"Lee"
Leonard — "Lenn'
Lennon — "Phil"
Leopard — "Leop"
Loos — "Bert"
Ludwikowski — "Luddy"
McCallion — "Mac"
McCarthy — "Mac"

McCormick, James — "Mac"
McCormick, Wm — "Irish"
McGinty — "Sarge"
"Mac"
McMillian — "Mac"
Maliniak — "Mal"
Maran — "Rubin"
Marcone — "Sam"
"Schnout"
"Nose"
Mark — "Bing"
Marker — "Carl"
Marshall — "Jimmy"
Mowery — "Bob"
Neuman — "Neuman"
Novotny — "Walt"
O' Brien — "Obie"
O' Hanlon — "Red"
O' Neil — "Peggy"
Passel — "Percy"
Paulillo — "Ralphie"
Phillips — "Phil"
Piccola — "Pickles"
Pietaro — "Shorty"
Marshey — "Indian"
Mathews — "Matt"
Matson — "Olie"
"Finn"
"Tiny"
Mauro — "Johnny"
Mayoka — "John"
Meyers — "Harry"
Mills — "Ken"
Minimi — "Rosie"
"Minnie"
Moeser — "Bill"
Molinari — "Moe"
Moran — "Mike"

Pionegro — "Pie"
Pringle, Charles — "Pringle"
Pringle, Thomas — "Jake"
Provo — "Pro"
"Sam"
Pyrlik — "Pyrlik"
Ray — "Chow"
"Ray"
Raymond — "Ray"
Rega — "Don"
Reed — "Reed"
Reid — "Less"
Reisberg — "Moe"
"Reese"
Repetti — "Bucky"
Rizzo — "Rizzo"
Rizzuto — "Tony"
Roberts — "Roberts"
Robinson — "Robbie"
"Bones"
Ruffin — "Ruff"
Rust — "Rust"
Satchell — "Satch"
Saxton — "Sax"
Schuster — "Schuster"
"Shrewdster"
Sciarrabba — "Rick"
Scripps — "Vic"
Setela — "John"
Shelley — "Shelley"
Sibley — "Sib"
Sklenar — "Frank"
Smith — "Smittie"
Sochinski — "Mike"
Sojkowski — "Steve"
Staffieri — "Joe"
"Nigger"
Stanton — "Pop"

Stasi — "Herman"
Stavola — "Frank"
Stouch — "Stouch"
Talarico — "Mike"
Tarantola — "Joe"
"Tarry"
Taranova — "Jim"
Thompson — "Tom"
Torres — "Danny"
Tretola — "Mike"
Trzaska — "Fearless"
Turcotte — "Lucky"
"Turk"

VanHorne — "Van"
VanMeter — "Van"
Voutour — "Frankie"
Webb — "Webb"
Wheat — "Woodie"
Williams — "Willie"
"Ray"
Yovino — "Joe"
Zalenski — "Al"
Zaslavsky — "Mush"
Zawacki — "George"

Superiorities

FATTEST
Maliniak
LaPlaca

THINNEST
Mauro
Loos
Setela
Robinson

OLDEST
Betts
Bradley
Deal
O' Neil

YOUNGEST
Belcher

BEST-LOOKING
Ray
Caso
Minimi
Buttino

BIGGEST CHOW-HOUNDS
Maran
Ray
Bunce
Herman
Staffieri

ONES MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED
Favreau
Bunce
Brown, J

MOST BASHFUL
Repetti
Setela
DiScala

SHORTEST
Pietaro
Lalli
Pringle, T

TALLEST
Brown, J
Dzioba

BIGGEST LOVERS
Champigny
Bradshaw

CUTEST
Pringle, T
Repetti
Loos
Ludwikowski
Carrero

BIGGEST LOUDMOUTHS
Zaslavsky
Paulillo
Molinari
McGinty
Marcone
O' Neil
Kiser

NEATEST
Ray
Stasi

BEST ATHLETES
Battaglino
Molinari
Gordnick
Buttino
Caso

MOST CHEERFUL
Reisberg
Zaslavsky
Leiss
Rega

BIGGEST BITCHERS
Abrams
Provo
Pietaro
Turcotte
Stanton

MOST FEARLESS
Labrade
Bunce

BEST DRIVERS
Zalenski
Marcone
Leonard
Minimi
Pringle, T

WHEEL-HAPPIEST
Gendrin
Kalmer
Lee
Mowery

BEST DRESSED
Acquaviva
Buttino
Bradshaw
Ray
Marcone

BEST SINGERS
DiScala
Rizzuto

MOST PESSIMISTIC
Tarantola
DeSanto
Provo
Kiser

MOST OPTIMISTIC
O' Hanlon
Rega
Marker

BEST DANCERS
Stanton
Ehrlich
Sciarrabba

BIGGEST NOSES
Marcone
Lalli
Graziano
Dicostanzo

DARKEST
Battaglino
Cosentino
Staffieri
Rega

MOST LIKELY TO BE MARRIED (POST-WAR)
Repetti
Molinari
Cosentino
Provo
Ehrlich
Reisberg

SLOWEST

Ruffin
Abrams
Champigny
Labrade

BEST PERSONALITIES

Ray
Reisberg
Minimi
Buttino

FAVORITE "SAD SACKS"

Branco
Trzaska
Setela
Di Scala
Beadle

* * *

Awards and Decorations

Silver Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster

Capt Roger Q Spencer, Jr
Sgt Vincent E Bunce

Silver Star Medal

1st Lt Richard X Gannon
1st Lt Edward Wilson
Sgt Nicholas Battaglino
T/5 Gerald Belcher
Pfc Elmer Egolf
Sgt Joseph Herman
Pfc Wallace Labrade
Pfc Ralph Paulillo
T/5 Morris Reisberg
Pfc John Stanton
Pfc Hubert Webb
Cpl Stephen Sojkowski
Sgt Jack McCool (posthumously)

Bronze Star Medal

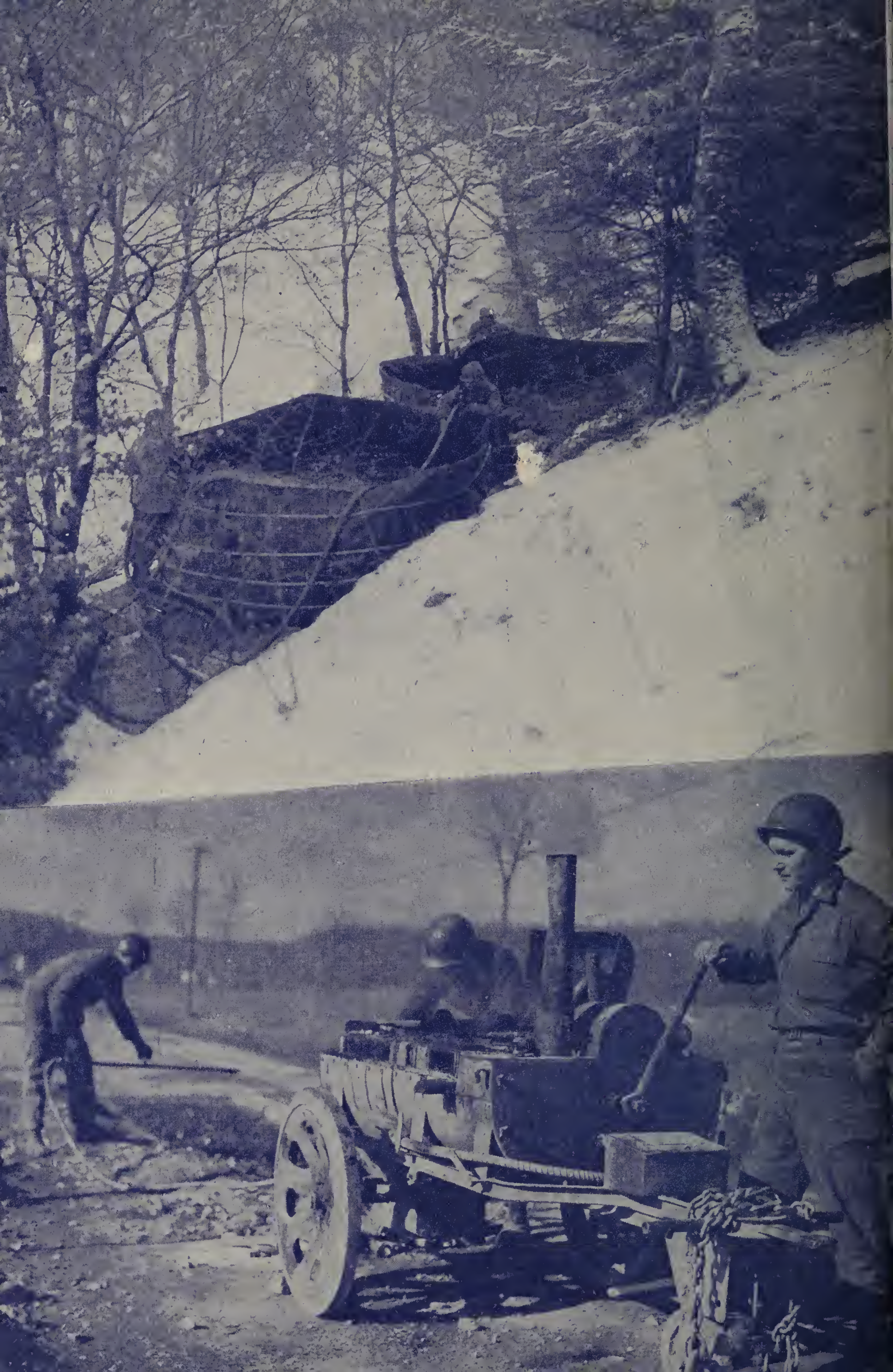
Capt Roger Q Spencer, Jr
1st Lt James R Malone
1st Lt Richard X Gannon
T/5 Louis Berggren
T/5 Charles Blankenberg
Pfc Lester Bourgeois
Sgt Vincent E Bunce
T/4 Elmer Cox
S Sgt Robert Favreau
Pfc Robert Haase
Pfc Levy Havard
S Sgt Kermit Kalmer
S Sgt Joe C Kiser
Sgt William Lee
T/5 John Mayoka
1st Sgt Anthony McGinty
Cpl Maurice Phillips
S Sgt Carmine Pionegro
S Sgt William Robinson
Sgt John D M Shelley
T/5 Winford Ray

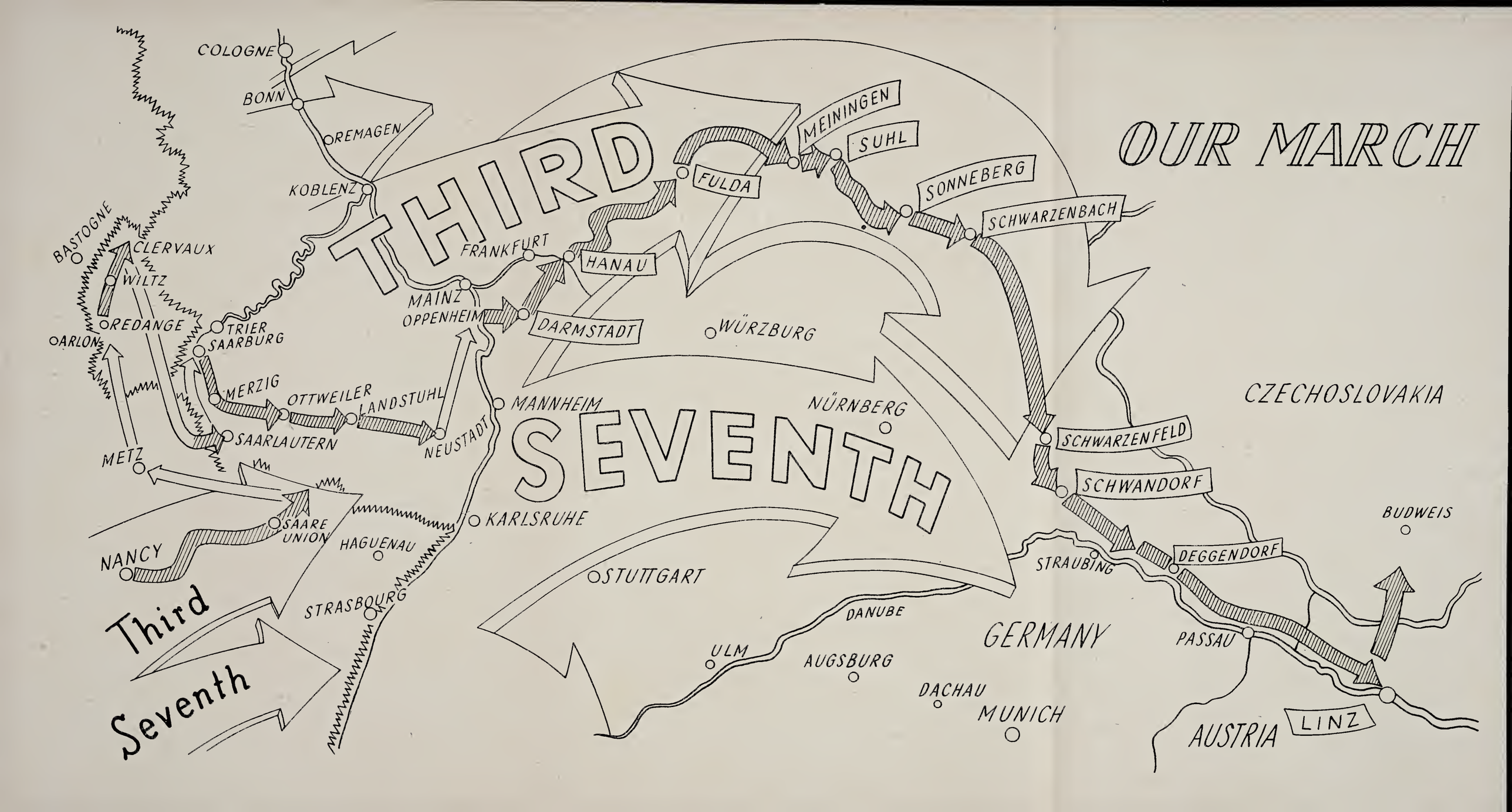
Purple Heart Medal

1st Lt Milton Bernstein
T/5 Gerald Belcher
Pfc Bernard Bogart
T/4 George Bowes
Pfc Don P Brown
Sgt James K Brown
Sgt Vincent E Bunce
Sgt Anthony Buttino
Pfc Charles P Choate
Pfc Anthony Cimarosse
Pfc Joseph Cohen
Sgt Sherman Emig
T/5 Werner Franz
Pfc Vincent Graziano
Pfc Levy Havard

Sgt Joseph Herman
Pfc Jesse Hobson
Pfc Russell Holmes
T 5 John Johnson
S Sgt Joe C Kiser
T/5 Charles Mathews
T/5 John Mayoka
Cpl William Mc Cormick
Pfc Ralph Paulillo
Pfc Domenick Rega
T/5 Morris Reisberg
Cpl Hillard Satchell
Pfc Americo Sciarrabba
Sgt John D M Shelley
Pfc Frank Sklenar
Pfc John Stanton
Pfc Lote VanMeter
Pfc Frank Voutour
Sgt Ray Williams
T/5 Winford Ray
Cpl Stephen Sojkowski

* * *




OUR MARCH
THIRD
SEVENTH
COLOGNE
BONN
REMAGEN
KOBLENZ
BASTOGNE
CLERVAUX
WILTZ
REDANGE
ARLON
TRIER
SAARBURG
MERZIG
OTTWEILER
LANDSTUHL
SAARLAUTERN
METZ
SAARE UNION
NANCY
HAGUENAU
STRASBOURG
NEUSTADT
MAINZ
OPPENHEIM
FRANKFURT
HANAU
FULDA
MEININGEN
SUHL
SONNEBERG
SCHWARZENBACH
DARMSTADT
WÜRZBURG
MANNHEIM
NÜRNBERG
KARLSRUHE
STUTTGART
ULM
DANUBE
AUGSBURG
DACHAU
MUNICH
GERMANY
SCHWARZENFELD
SCHWANDORF
STRAUBING
DEGGENDORF
PASSAU
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
BUDWEIS
AUSTRIA
LINZ
Third
Seventh

TENAX PROPOSITI